PENTHOUSE

AUTUMN 2018

INTERVIEW
CHRIS HEMSWORTH

FAKE NEWS
AND THE NEW AGE
OF INFO WARS

THE GRAND PRIX
TAKES OFF FOR
ANOTHER YEAR

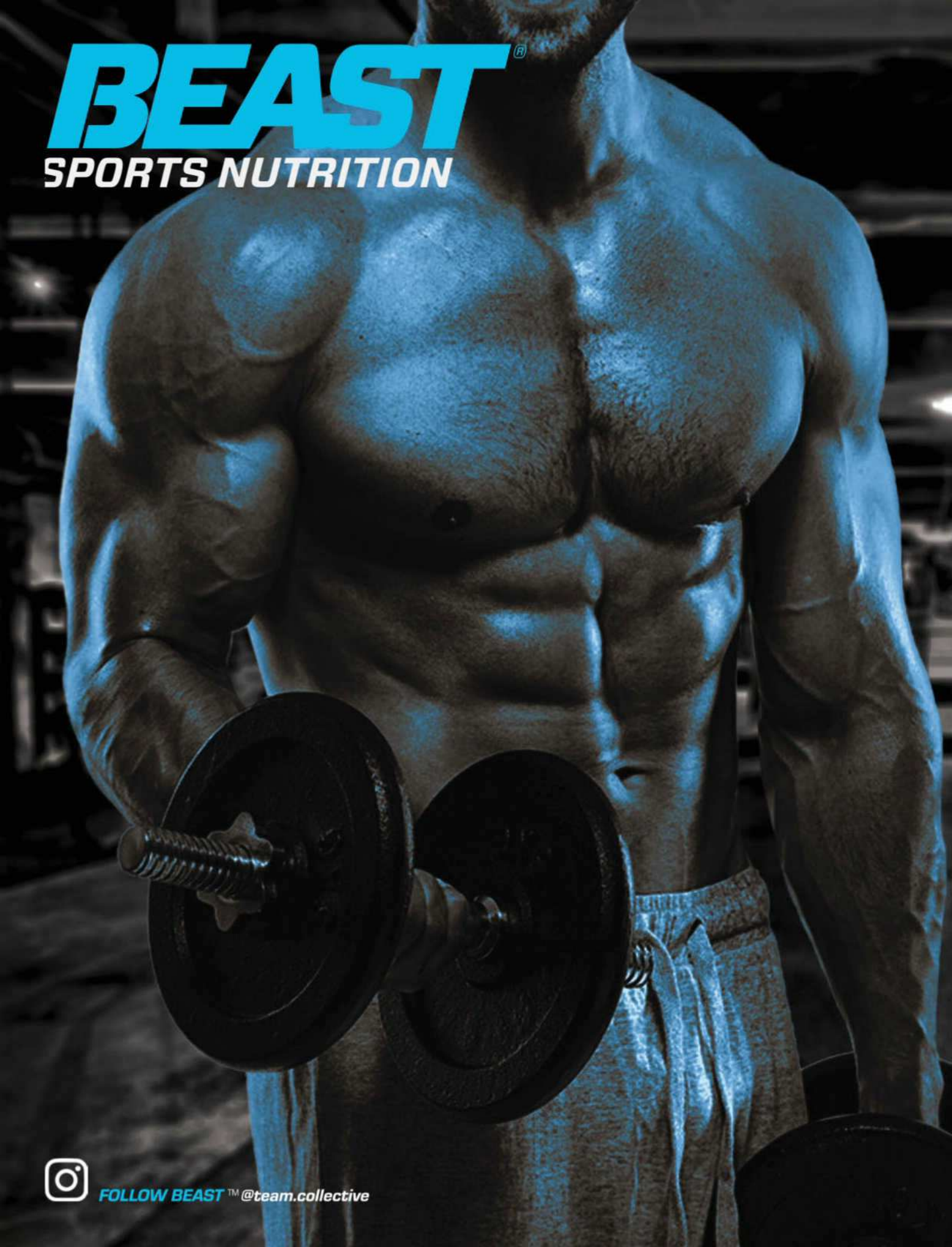
BOUGAINVILLE ON
THE BRINK OF WAR

THE MOST
DANGEROUS
HOLIDAY
DESTINATIONS

APR/MAY 2018 | $14.95 NZ $15.90

9 770158 065008 05

UNRESTRICTED
M (Mature)
NOT RECOMMENDED FOR
READERS UNDER 15 YEARS


BEAST®
SPORTS NUTRITION
FOLLOW BEAST™ @team.collective

UNLEASH YOUR BEAST!

ICED - T FLAVOUR

SUPPORT STRENGTH + MASS

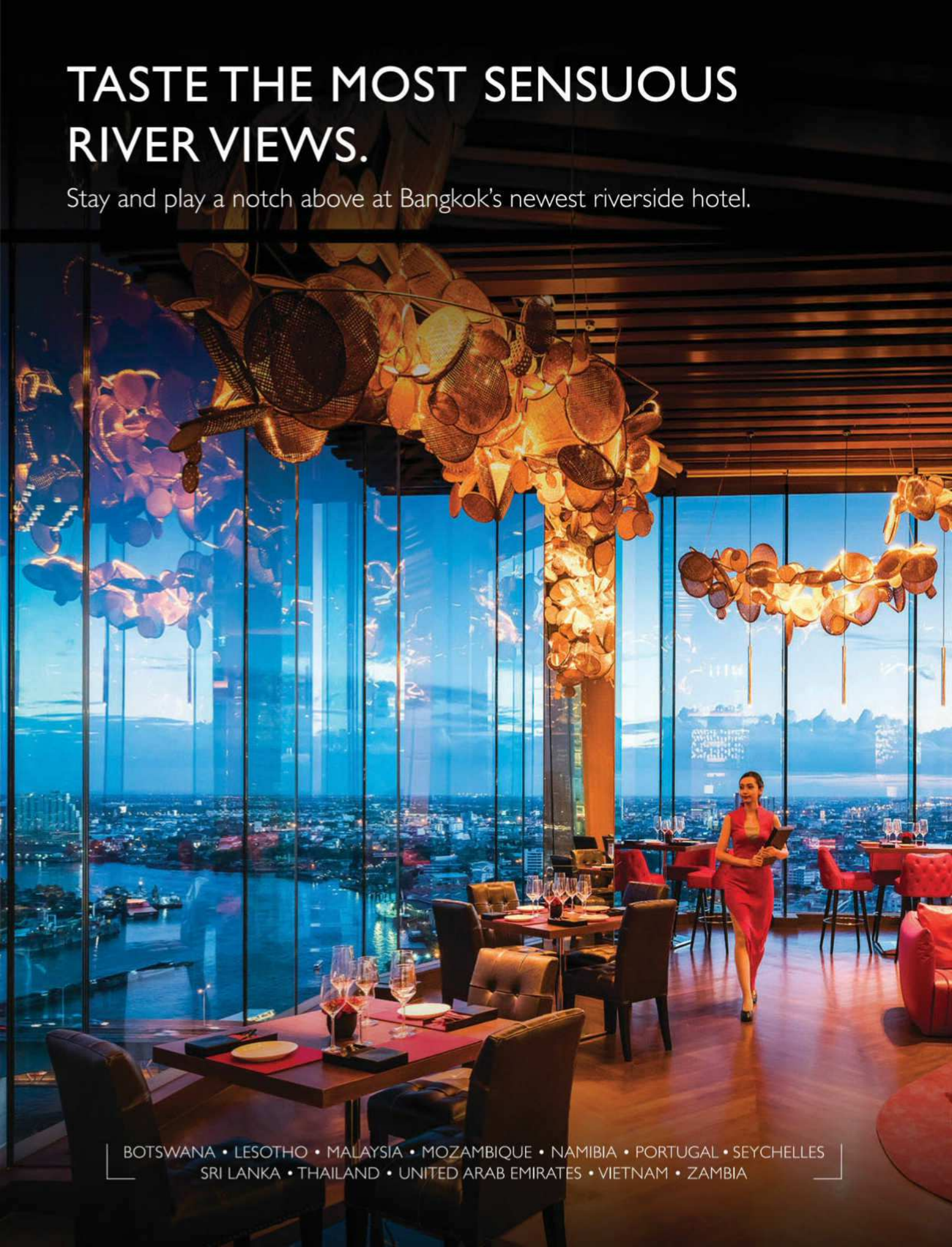
LIBIDO SUPPORT

LIVER + KIDNEY SUPPORT

NOW AVAILABLE AUSTRALIA WIDE - CALL US: +61 7 3807 9065 OR EMAIL US : SALES@COLLECTIVENUTRITION.COM.AU

TASTE THE MOST SENSUOUS RIVER VIEWS.

Stay and play a notch above at Bangkok's newest riverside hotel.



BOTSWANA • LESOTHO • MALAYSIA • MOZAMBIQUE • NAMIBIA • PORTUGAL • SEYCHELLES
SRI LANKA • THAILAND • UNITED ARAB EMIRATES • VIETNAM • ZAMBIA

Rise above the river for chilled views.
Stay in style. Soak up the cityscape.
AVANI Riverside is now open. Bangkok's
best backdrops are waiting for you.

avanihotels.com

AVANI RIVERSIDE BANGKOK HOTEL

TEQUILA
100% DE AGAVE
SILVER
PATRÓN
IMMIGRATION
ARRIVED
30 NOV 20
SYDNEY AIRPORT
AUSTRALIA
IMMIGRATION
26 AUG 20
HONG KONG
IMMIGRATION
12 SEP
05 NOV
03 Juli
Tourist Office
UAe
750 ml
HECHO EN MEXICO
SOLE IMPORTER:
THE PATRÓN SPIRITS COMPANY
LAS VEGAS, NV 89118, USA

PENTHOUSE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Damien Costas

EDITOR
Sean Bruce

ART DIRECTOR
Gavin Morrison

VIDEO DIRECTOR
James Millynn

WRITERS
Ian Lloyd Neubauer, Stewart Bell, Seth Ferranti, Helen Dale, Kerryn Pohli, Joe Cutcliffe, Tobias Handke, Chris Shearer, Nathan Harmond, Suzy Maloy, Ben Bohane, Daisy Cousens

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Ben Tsui, Andrew Lucas, Henryk Lovachzewski,
Steve Coleman.

ILLUSTRATIONS
Anton Emdin

MARKETING
Tristan Brookes-Perrin

CIRCULATION & PRODUCTION
Alistair Cook

ADVERTISING
Anessa Caputo

PUBLISHER
Flithy Gorgeous Pty Ltd
210 Crown Street,
Darlinghurst NSW 2010, Australia
Tel: 1300 784 516
info@phpublications.com

DISTRIBUTORS
Gordon & Gotch
Tel: 1300 650 666

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
Magshop
Call within Australia: 136 116
Mon-Fri: 9am to 5pm AEST

PENTHOUSE GLOBAL MEDIA INC.
Founded March 1965 by BOB GUCCIONE

Copyright General Media Communications, Inc., all rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise – or stored in any retrieval system without the written permission of the copyright holder and the publishers. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome and must be submitted via email; no typewritten traditional mail submissions will be accepted. Names and addresses must be included with all correspondence. Penthouse does not accept responsibility for lost editorial or photo submissions. All unsolicited submissions remain the property of Penthouse.

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A LITTLE over 50 years ago, a London-based artist named Bob Guccione picked up a camera and founded this magazine. His intent was to provide men with a product of such unparalleled quality that they could read it both for the beautiful women contained on its pages and for the content and character of its writing.

Today, in a time when high-quality journalism is becoming scarce, we continue this tradition. The world is flooded with fake news, biased journalists, Twitter mobs and corrupt politicians, determined to distort the truth and push their agendas on to you. Just like Bob 50 years ago, we believe free speech and freedom of expression are the only tools we have at our disposal to uncover the truth and expose their lies and hypocrisies. *Penthouse* has always fought on the side of liberty, be it in the civil rights movements in the 60s or veterans rights in the 70s and 80s. And we are still fighting with you – against the scolds, the finger-waggers and the loud minority of elites who use their positions of power to seek to control the way you speak, think and live.

And we're going to have a shit-ton of fun doing it. This issue is packed with content you won't find anywhere else from stories about civil wars in Papua New Guinea to reports on the fake news media and, of course, the world's most beautiful women shot by the finest photographers around.

Enjoy,

DAMIEN COSTAS
Editor-In-Chief

PENTHOUSE

CONTENTS

APRIL/MAY 2018

24: MAN OF THE MOMENT: RUSSELL BRAND

The trouble-making funnyman is back on tour with a new book on addiction recovery.

32: UNCOVERED: DAVEY JACK

Going green with Kora Jade.

38: INTERVIEW: CHRIS HEMSWORTH

The Aussie superstar talks about his transition from superhero to special forces in his latest film *12 Strong*.

44: REPORT: INFO WARS

In a world of fake news, misinformation and propaganda, it's increasingly difficult to know who we can trust to get the story straight.

52: SPORT: FORMULA ONE 2018

A new season of fast-paced action takes off in the world's most glamorous sport.

58: IN FOCUS: ANDREW LUCAS

Fantasy, reality and illusion: the world through the eyes of Andrew.

76: HIGH LIFE: PARADISE LOST

Travel to the most dangerous and beautiful places in the world.

82: COVER SHOOT: AUTUMN MORNING

A lazy afternoon with Isa Langnes.

92: FEATURE: MINE, NOT YOURS

Heated debate over the reopening of Paguna Mine threatens to destablise Bougainville's 40-year-long struggle for independence.

104: Q&A: HOLIDAY

We talk with director Isabella Eklöf and actor Victoria Carmen Sonne about their latest film, *Holiday*: a beautiful and brutal take on the gangster genre.

108: THE PERILS OF CUFFING SEASON

The period between the beginning of autumn and the end of winter can be dangerous for the eternal bachelor.

115: STYLE: DESIGNER DESIRE

We profile some of the most innovative and original local designers.

JBL
DARE TO LISTEN!
PUMP UP THE PARTY
Play your favourite summer or party tunes with the JBL Boombox party speaker. With a 24 hour battery life and fully waterproof, you can party poolside, parkside or beachside. RRP $549.00
Check out the range today at JB HI FI, Myer, Harvey Norman, The Good Guys, Bing Lee
jbl.com.au

THIS IS AN ACTUAL ~~THING~~ *Fling*

THE NEW CONSENT-BASED APP | A BUTCHER SAVED BY BLACK PUDDING | VIAGRA IS IN THE AIR IN AN IRISH TOWN

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

JAKE REQUESTS CONSENT

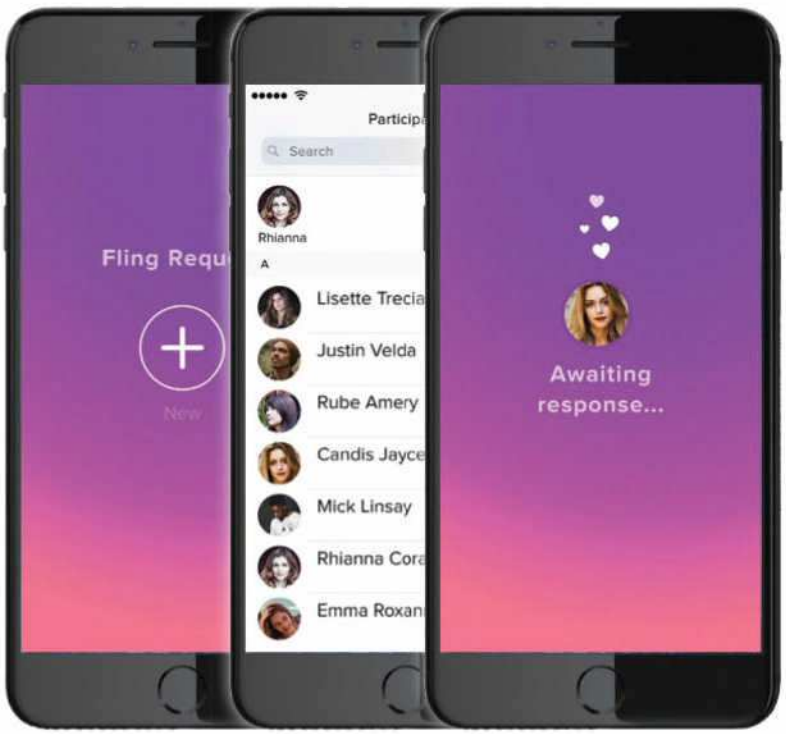
THERE'S a new dating app in town and it's nothing like Tinder. First, it won't help you meet girls near you, or even get a date. It's called LegalFling, and it's used to grant consent to interested sexual partners with the swipe of a thumb.

Do you hear it? That's the sound of 2018. The Dutch-created app claims to "record sexual consent in a legally binding agreement, which is verifiable through the blockchain, a secure, encrypted public ledger that records 'transactions'".

Upon opening the app, you're given a number of options: Photo & Video; Use Condom; STD Free; Explicit Language; BDSM, and many more. Your 'counterparty' requests that you accept the terms before you have sex and by agreeing you accept the fling and if you're still horny by that point, then you can get right to it.

But the app has been widely criticised, for example, what if someone changes their mind halfway through the act. "Or what if a blacked-out person's finger could be used to give 'consent' by moving their hand" says Alix, an ambassador for Brook, a sexual health charity for young people.

Find out more about the smallprint at https://legalfling.io



CREDIT: PROUD_NATALIA

BLACK PUDDING MATTERS

A BUTCHER, just minutes from death, beat his way to freedom with the assistance of a 1.5kg block of blood sausage. The British breakfast staple came in handy after 70-year-old Chris McCabe inadvertently trapped himself inside of his shop's walk-in freezer.

The father of four from Totnes, Devon, tells *The Telegraph*: "Black pudding saved my life, without a doubt. No one could hear me banging because [the freezer] is outside, round the back of the shop. I had rushed in. I was in a hurry as usual and I heard the door shut behind me. I thought that was OK, because I could kick the safety button from inside."

However the safety button had frozen over in the sub-20 degrees Celsius and McCabe's future was suddenly filled with the chilling possibility that he may not escape. At most he would have 30 minutes before freezing to death.

"I've been shut in before and I used the button to get out then, but this time it was frozen solid. I removed all the metal racking around it and I looked around for something to hit it with and I came on the idea of using a black pudding stick."

Gripping it like a police battering ram and getting all his weight behind it, McCabe bashed the button several times before the ice broke and he was able to release himself from his icy coffin.

We hope he's alright – but more so, we hope when he recounts the story, he emphasises that a big black sausage saved his life.

ULTRARUNNER'S CAREER DOWN THE GURGLER

PROFESSIONAL sport's integrity has gone to shit – literally. Kelly Agnew, a keen Ultramarathon runner had his title stripped after it was revealed that he'd been hiding in portable toilets to cheat and win races, the *New York Post* reports.

Agnew was disqualified from Across the Years, a fixed-time event in Arizona, when he was caught "registering laps without running the complete loop of the course," according to a Facebook post from race organisers.

The event organisers decided to investigate and found his lap times were full of shit, so to speak. "He was witnessed circling back at the start/finish staging area after completing a lap, spending over seven minutes in a portable restroom and then 'completing' the lap and going on for his next without actually running the mile-plus loop," organisers said.

Honestly, anyone willing to sit in a portaloo for any allocated time should be awarded some sort of medal, but in this case, the only medal Agnew deserves is one for the biggest shithead.

"It saddens us to see this take place at an event that is centred around camaraderie amongst runners and support of top performances," organisers said. "This type of cheating is not tolerated by our race or race organisation."

NABBED, THE NIGERIAN PRINCE

THE Nigerian prince email scam has earned itself notoriety in online communities. While most kings ceased to exist around the age of the internet, there is one prince who lived on – the Nigerian prince, and he comes bearing riches.

Following an 18-month investigation into the email scam, police arrested 67-year-old Michael Neu from Louisiana, who – surprise, surprise – is not a real prince. He's a trashy grandfather living in a trailer park.

Neu was charged with 269 counts of wire fraud and money laundering. Police described him as a middleman who participated in hundreds of financial transactions designed to con money from victims across the US. Monies acquired by Neu was wired to co-conspirators in Nigeria.

MEET THE SAND-EATING LITHUANIAN

GRANDMOTHERS are known for having strange remedies to fix your maladies when you're not feeling well, but what if Grandma offered you a teaspoon of sand?

Stanislava Monstvilene, 70, from Lithuania, says she has been living on nothing but sand for the past decade. She also claims the mineral-rich substance helped cure her of a brain tumour. While at one point she developed an addiction to it, she has since overcome it and now swears by its healing properties.

"I had a late-stage brain tumour. They said I wouldn't last very long. My haemoglobin level was 60 (around five times over the normal range)," Monstvilene told *RT*. "I was passing by and once an idea came to my mind – take the sand and eat it. For the first time I choked but then I got used to it."

As bizarre as it sounds, Monstvilene allegedly spent time with therapist Liliane Vaishvilene who measured her health over a number of sessions and found that it had actually improved.

"She has good blood. We examined her a while ago, but for the past few years she has not visited and has not applied for medical help," Vaishvilene told a reporter.

For those interested in trying the sand diet*, Monstvilene has some helpful advice she would like to share.

"You should not mix it with food or water. You should not eat anything else, otherwise, you will feel sick. And the water should not be drunk. I used to eat wet sand so after it I do not want to drink," she said.

"Sand can be sour. This one has no taste at all. But the other sand, brown, is sour," Monstvilene told reporters while allegedly munching on a pile of crushed rocks.

**Not that we advise eating rocks and shells!*

ANGRY PASSENGER DEALS IN SHIT

AN American man has smeared the reputation of the US – all over Phuket Airport in Thailand.

American holidaymaker Steve Cho made recent headlines for his unusual airport antics. The man was causing a stir as he stalked naked and enraged through the airport, hurling abuse and throwing faeces at airport staff and onlookers.

Terrified bystander Wannee Ming described the spectacle as "the scariest and most disgusting thing I ever saw at an airport."

Eventually, the literal shit show was brought to an end when the crazed man was arrested by six airport security officers who alleged the source of his rage was "too many sex drugs". Initial reports that the man was flying Tiger and copped a massive luggage fee causing him to fly into a fit of rage are yet to be confirmed.

Officers eventually calmed the shit-stirrer, with onlookers commenting on the professionalism of all those attending. When he regained his composure, Cho admitted that he took too much Viagra and lost consciousness. Which confirms the truth in the old saying that God gave man a penis and a brain, but only enough blood to run one.

THE HORNIEST TOWN IN IRELAND

WE know a good story when we hear one, and many a time it's from the mouth of an Irishman.

Recent reports put Ringaskiddy on the map and it's not because of the amusing name. Residents of the tiny village in County Cork made headlines recently with reports of "something in the air," specifically, something that's "getting residents stiff". Beg your pardon?

The airborne aphrodisiac is known to locals as 'love fumes'. Residents told *The Times* that they believe the chemicals are coming from the Pfizer factory located on Lough Mahon, a small island in the middle of the lake. The factory produces Viagra and is likely responsible for the fumes, which are becoming airborne and getting the local lads horny.

Local bartender at the Ferry Boat Inn, Debbie O'Grady joked to *The Times* about the supposed effects on residents, "One whiff and you're stiff."

"They settle down here. As they say, there's something in the air – not that we need it, of course. But for some fellas with problems in that department it can be a blessing," reported Debbie's mum Sadie.

"We've been getting the love fumes for years now for free," Sadie told *The Times*. "It's amazing the number of people who come to this village, perhaps out of curiosity, and then never leave," she said.

A spokesperson from Pfizer has denied the reports, saying there's no merit to the loved-up stories.

"Our manufacturing processes have always been highly sophisticated as well as highly regulated," the spokesperson told *The Times*. Yet despite the company's claims, since as far back as 1998, locals have been convinced that love is in the air.

True tale? Or a convenient story to tell the local ladies? Visit the town yourself and let us know if you find any 'hard' evidence.

CREDIT: RYANLANE

SPACE SANDWICH SMUGGLER

ONE of humanity's greatest achievements is the launching of a giant, phallic-shaped metal tube out of the atmosphere and into the black abyss beyond. Another of humanity's greatest achievements is sliced bread, so when the two are combined, we know something special is happening.

Meet 34-year-old John Young: During a bit of downtime on his journey aboard America's first two-man space flight, Young signalled to his co-pilot and commander, Virgil 'Gus' Grissom, then proceeded to pull a corned beef sandwich out of his pocket. Audio from the mission reveals the following exchange.

Grissom: What is it?
Young: Corn beef sandwich.
Grissom: Where did that come from?
Young: I brought it with me. Let's see how it tastes. Smells, doesn't it?
Grissom: Yes, it's breaking up. I'm going to stick it in my pocket.
Young: Is it?
Young: It was a thought, anyways.
Grissom: Yep.
Young: Not a very good one.
Grissom: Pretty good, though, if it would just hold together.

To be fair, one of the objectives of the mission was to test new space foods, it's just that sandwiches weren't on the menu. The pair had been sent up with dehydrated packets that they would reconstitute with a water gun.

Post-flight analysis of the incident led to an appropriations committee meeting to question NASA administrator George Mueller about the event. To which he replied, "We have taken steps … to prevent recurrences of corned beef sandwiches in future flights."

TIME TRAVELLER RETURNS WITH PHOTOGRAPHIC PROOF

THE world seems like it's going down the toilet these days as Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un engage in a dick-swinging contest – but things are set to get better according to an anonymous man from the year 6,000. A video posted to *ApexTV* – a channel specialising in mysterious and paranormal activity – features a man with a blurred face claiming to have travelled back through time to the present with information concerning secret technologies and the fate of humanity.

In the video, the man, whose voice is distorted, explains that during the 90s he was part of a secret government program sending people forward in time. He goes on to detail how life in the future makes modern humanity look "primitive" and that the world now lives in peace under the rule of an AI overlord, confirming the long-held theory robots will rise up and take over the world.

"They don't want me telling you this," says the man at one point during the video. "They're especially not going to like what I'm about to show you." This is when the man produces a photo of a major city from the year 6,000 as evidence he's travelled through time. Unfortunately, the photo is blurred and it's hard to make out the image, though luckily the man has a solid explanation for this. "In the time travel process pictures tend to get distorted, as well as many other things," he says without a hint of sarcasm.

Other details the man reveals include the creation of technology enabling people to shrink themselves like in the film *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*, as well as the cure for cancer having finally been found. Despite the scepticism surrounding the video the man claims time travel will be common knowledge by 2028, so it's only a lazy 10-year wait until we can all travel to the utopian future described by the man and live with our robot masters in peace.

CREDIT: YOUTUBE / APEXTV

TOM HARDY

VENOM

COMING SOON

EXPERIENCE IT IN IMAX

MARVEL

VenomTheMovie.net
#Venom

COLUMBIA PICTURES

THE VEGAN DILEMMA

IT'S nothing new that crazy, hypocritical vegans are pissing everybody off. After posting an image on Facebook of herself eating tofu, Ms. Rey was praised privately by an anonymous vegan: "I love tofu, it's just the best. Welcome to the best club around, Veganism!" However, once she found out that Ms. Rey wasn't vegan, and was in fact just eating tofu because she liked it, the messages took a more acidic flavour.

"Oh, so you're just pretending to be vegan because it's cool and in? I've been vegan for three years and it was the best decision I've made in my life. Being vegan isn't hip or cool, it's important." Yeah, right-o vegan warrior.

After responding that she was "never pretending to be vegan", the unnamed vegan warrior was not satisfied, "tofu is strictly for vegans or vegetarians. You are basically admitting to appropriating from us and stealing from us for your own selfish use," to which Ms Rey responded with a cracker of her own. "With all due respect, I'm not appropriating anything, I'm eating food like you, you absolute f***".

PENTAGON ADMITS UFO PROGRAM EXISTED BUT NOT IF IT CONTINUES

THE search for alien life forms has been hinted at by the American government over the years, but the Pentagon has finally come clean and admitted it had a secret program dedicated to the search of unidentified flying objects, commonly known as UFOs.

Funding for the multi-million dollar program was initially established by Democratic senator and space lover Harry Reid in 2007. The program survived for five years before being terminated in 2012. The program was allocated $US22 million in annual funding as part of the US Defence Departments whopping $600 million dollar budget.

The New York Times reported the money allocated to the program went to a space research company run by billionaire Robert Bigelow. Like Reid, Bigelow's a huge space nut who's convinced aliens exist, with the research completed by his company going towards proving extraterrestrials are real.

Although the program officially ended in 2012, the article in the *Times* claimed the program remains in existence and is backed by shadowy agencies within the current government.

The Pentagon came out and acknowledged the program, saying: "The Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program ended in the 2012 timeframe."

Pentagon spokeswoman Laura Ochoa went on to say in a statement; "It was determined that there were other, higher priority issues that merited funding and it was in the best interests of the DoD to make a change."

While admitting the program existed the DoD was non-committal on whether a similar program was still in action. Maybe it's best left to Reid himself who summed up the situation with this tweet, "The truth is out there. Seriously."

CREDIT:REAL444

SEARCH FOR PORN INCREASED 50% IN HAWAII AFTER FALSE MISSILE THREAT

THERE'S no bigger event to get the blood pumping than a near death experience, so it's no wonder Hawaiian residents turned to porn to alleviate their tension after a missile threat turned out to be fake.

Pornhub, one of the most successful and well-known pornographic sites released data showing a massive increase in viewership just after the missile attack was found to be false.

Statistics released by the website showed a significant drop in traffic when residents of Hawaii received a text message alert at 8:07am on January 13, informing them a ballistic missile was headed towards the island. By 8:23am traffic had dropped 77 per cent below the average of a typical Saturday, with people placing their safety above a quick tug.

At 8:45am residents were notified the attack was a false alarm and could resume living their lives in safety. Pornhub reported traffic went back to normal soon after but by 9:01am, just some 16 minutes after the false alarm, traffic had surged to 48 per cent above normal levels. Obviously people had returned to their homes and decided the best way to relax and relieve their stress was by watching some porn.

This is an interesting discovery from Pornhub, who also recently revealed people are watching less porn than they did 10 years ago. Maybe the constant nuclear threat from North Korea will help increase people's libidos and keep the porn industry making profit.

CREDIT: SDIGITAL

IKEA ASKS WOMEN TO PEE ON ADVERT TO REVEAL DISCOUNT

SWEDISH homewear giant Ikea has taken a rather strange route to get parents shopping. The latest advertisement for a baby crib from the global retailer also doubles as a pregnancy test.

The advertisement in popular Swedish magazine *Amelia* acts like a pregnancy test, revealing a special discount for a baby crib for expecting women when they pee on the advertisement. The paper in the magazine has been created from the same materials as a regular pregnancy test, but instead of a yes or no symbol showing up, the page reveals a discount coupon for the crib.

Advertising agency Akestam Holst – who have held an account with Ikea since 2013 – joined forces with Mercene Labs to adapt a pregnancy test strip to be used for the advertisement. "Technical advancements made during the work with the campaign have the potential to improve medical diagnostics," the lab claimed.

This isn't the first time Ikea and Akestam Holst have been ahead of the game with advertising angles, with a 2016 campaign featuring a divorced couple, something often seen as taboo by ad agencies.

This is certainly the best pee-based ad since Animal Planet put urine-scented advertisements at the bottom of lampposts to attract dogs. The only downside is once peed on, mums have to dry the coupon off and present it in store for the reduction. Not the most hygienic process but anything for a bit of discount, right?

GET THE PICTURE

FORGET your morning hit of espresso, to really get the heart started, jump from the 300-metre high open deck of the Kuala Lumpur Tower. This pic was taken during the International Jump in Kuala Lumpur, September 27, 2017 and our palms are sweating just looking at it. I think we'll have to stick with the espresso.
Credit: Samsul Said

HOT SHOT

JORDAN

@jordan_finlayson

We asked Jordan what her favourite thing about autumn is, but she tells us she's more of a summer girl. She escapes to Ibiza as soon as the weather changes to dance in front of thousands in the clubs scattered along the beachfront. Not a bad way to spend the colder months.

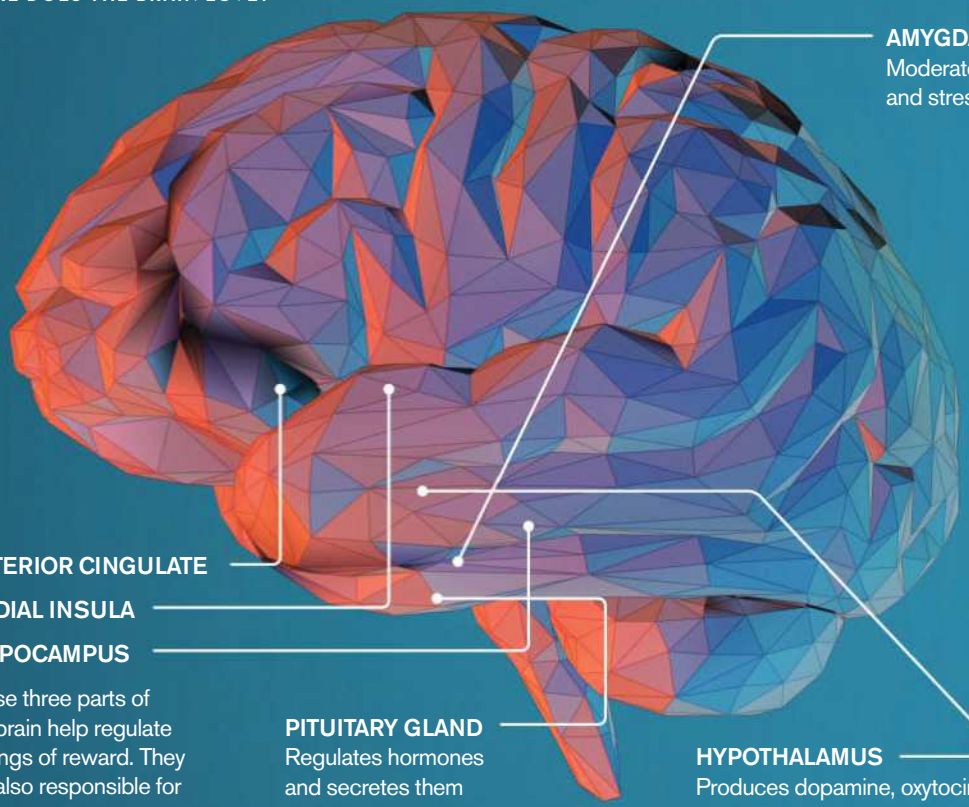
Photographer: Colemanphoto

DOWNLOAD

THE SCIENCE OF FALLING IN LOVE

THE subject of countless songs, poems and artworks, love is difficult to describe at the best of times. But maybe it's not as complicated as we think. Below are the combined chemical reactions occurring in the body at the moment we fall head over heels.

WHERE DOES THE BRAIN LOVE?



AMYGDALA
Moderates fear and stress

ANTERIOR CINGULATE

MEDIAL INSULA

HIPPOCAMPUS

These three parts of the brain help regulate feelings of reward. They are also responsible for the development of love

PITUITARY GLAND
Regulates hormones and secretes them into the body

HYPOTHALAMUS
Produces dopamine, oxytocin and vasopressin, all of which are necessary in the process of falling in love

FALLING IN LOVE: STEP BY STEP

1

The hypothalamus releases **dopamine** into the body, causing feelings of ecstacy and excitement.

2

As dopamine levels increase, **serotonin** levels decrease. This may result in feelings of obsession or infatuation.

3

Oxytocin and **vasopressin** are produced by the **hypothalamus** and stored into the **pituitary gland**, which secretes hormones into the body.

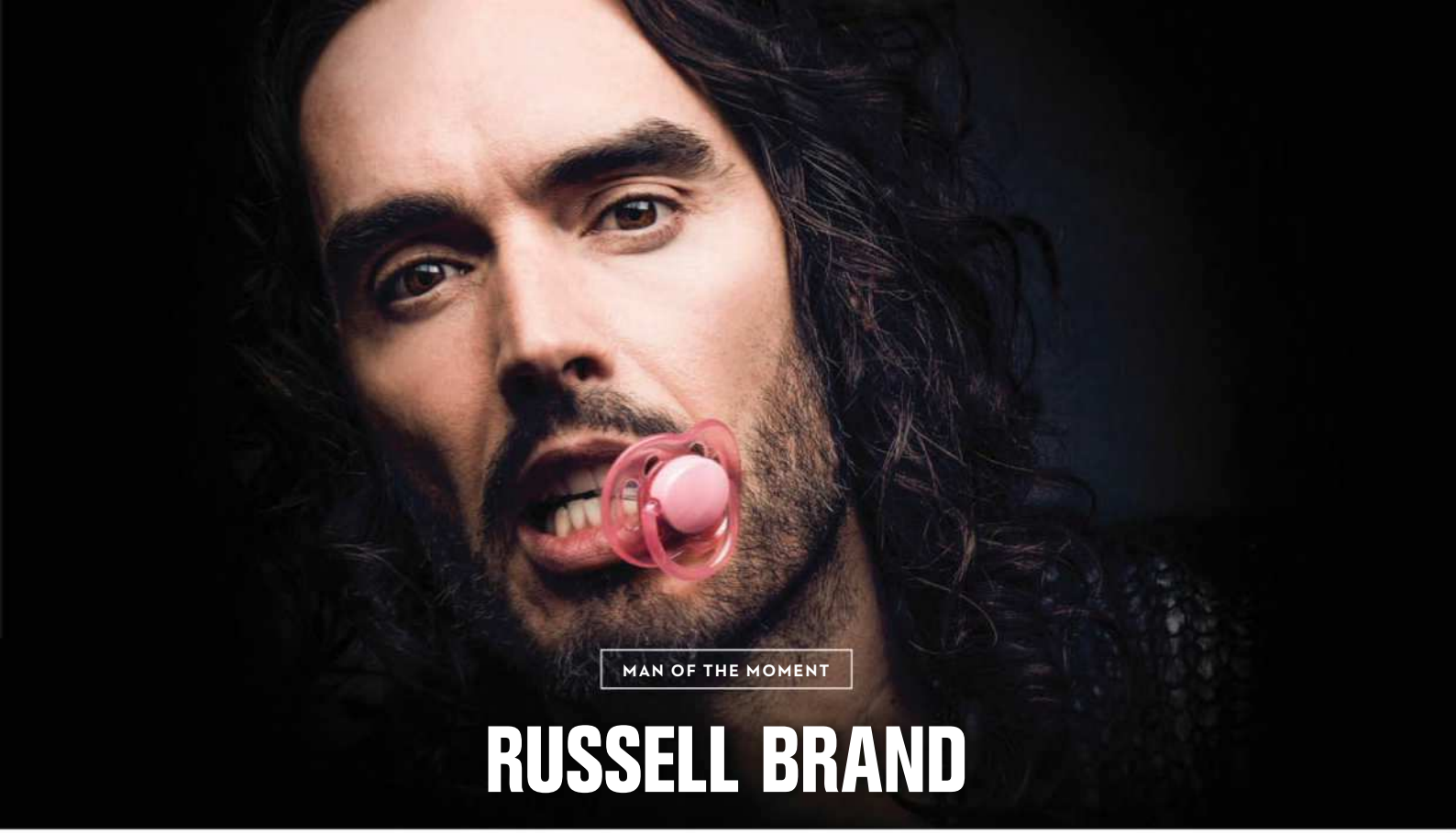
4

In times of extreme passion – such as during an **orgasm** – these hormones enter the **bloodstream.**

5

Released hormones affect different parts of the brain. Activity **increases** in the romantic core and the **amygdala** deactivates. The result is a feeling of unity between people in love.

SOURCE: "THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF LOVE" SEMIR ZEKI, HERITAGE.ORG



MAN OF THE MOMENT

RUSSELL BRAND

A NUMBER of tattoos decorate Russell Brand's skin, all of which carry different meanings. There are references to both Christian and Hindu spirituality, West Ham United's football club logo, lines and symbols denoting different chakras and a portrait of the Queen of England (plastered on his thigh to remind him Britain is his home). But one in particular stands out. A quote Brand attributes to Oscar Wilde that reads, "If you want to tell people the truth, make them laugh. Otherwise they'll kill you." It's appropriate for a comedian who has built a career out of saying things that get him into trouble. Thankfully he's funny – which must be why he's still alive.

Although with his past in mind, he's lucky to be.

Earlier in his life Brand was heavily into drugs, which could easily have sent him in the way of so many other young and talented entertainers. From a troubled childhood through to a meteoric rise as a comedian and video host on MTV, Brand's behaviour was always a mischievous brew of appalling and hilarious. Some highlights from his self-destructive period include introducing Kylie Minogue to his heroin dealer, fighting with an audience member at a stand-up show, trying to throw himself and a security guard off of a balcony and dressing up as Osama bin Laden the day after 9/11 (this stunt ultimately led MTV to fire him). His spectacular nosedive finally came to an end when his agent John Noel found Brand in a bathroom strung out on heroin on Christmas Eve and organised an intervention. This led to his abstinence from drugs in 2002 (the pair parted ways in 2017 when Brand moved to a new agent).

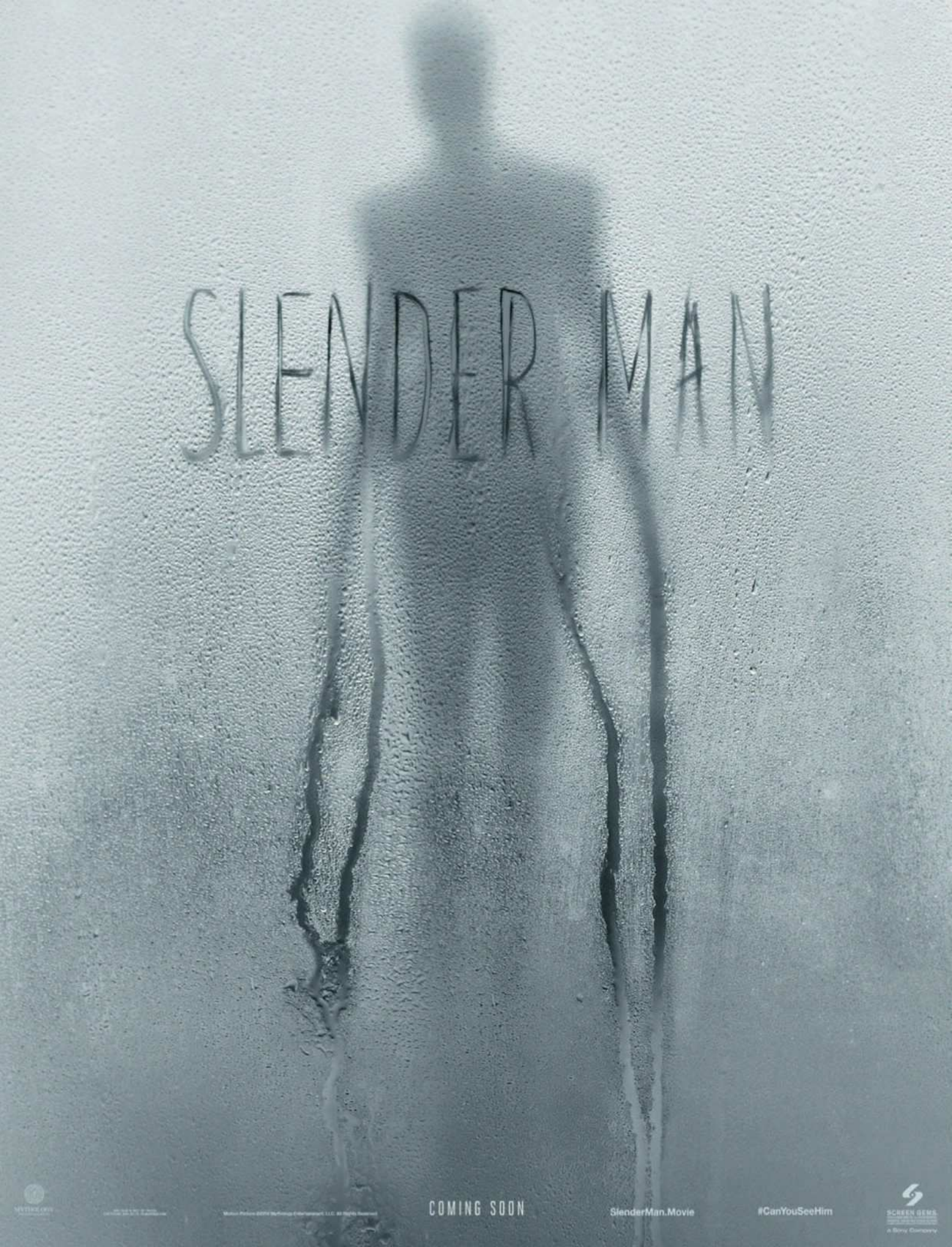
Now the headlines associated with Brand mostly spell out messages of hope and recovery. 'Russell Brand: my life without drugs' reads a *Guardian* article from 2013, 'Russell Brand on heroin, abstinence and addiction' says a *Spectator* piece from the same year and, more recently, 'Recovery, Russell Brand Style' in the *New York Times*.

His latest book *Recovery: Freedom from our Addictions* covers the 12-step program that helped Brand beat his demons. He believes that no matter what your affliction (and in the modern world, we're all afflicted by something, he says) there's an answer for it in the 12 steps. Eat too much chocolate? Twelve steps. Your phone dominates your life? Twelve steps. Addicted to self-help books? You better believe it. According to Brand, 12 steps is more than a program for recovering alcos – it can be used to improve pretty much any aspect of life.

Thankfully, all the positive living hasn't stopped him being funny. Anyone whose memory stretches back to 2013 would recall his acceptance speech at *GQ*'s Men of the Year Awards. Brand pointed out Hugo Boss, the event's sponsor, had dressed the Third Reich, adding that, "The Nazis did have flaws, but, you know, they did look fucking fantastic." Organisers were ropeable. But let's be honest – his outburst was bloody hilarious.

In his new show, *Re:Birth*, he goes over interviews from his brief stint as a political guru, where he would foam at the mouth about capitalism and income inequality before returning to his £3.3 million mansion in Oxfordshire. He watches the vids alongside his audience and takes the piss out of himself in hilarious fashion. Brand's most on form when he's being self-deprecating and the show has been well-received by critics and fans. He's dropped the whole political shtick and gone back to doing what he does best: talking about himself.

And while he is self-obsessed – he admits as much himself – it doesn't matter. He's charismatic, funny and people can't help but like him. Through all the wild-eyed, jaunty phases of his career we've been there, cheering his honest appraisals of himself and the world at large. Because he tells the truth, no matter how it sounds, and that's what's kept him alive.


SLENDER MAN
COMING SOON
SlenderMan.Movie
#CanYouSeeHim
SCREEN GEMS
a Sony Company

MUSIC

SWEET MEMES ARE MADE OF THESE

THE top categories at the Grammys – Album of the Year, Record of the Year and Song of the Year – are a problem. Most of the judges who decide them are old enough to have actually listened to music on a gramophone, so they end up end up in the hands of painfully safe artists. Take Bruno Mars, for example. He's a great musician and all, but he's also the auditory equivalent of a Toyota Corolla.

So, we'll give the Grammys a bit of advice. They should make the awards night more relevant, particularly with the youth market, by introducing a category for artists who have 'memed' their way to success.

Think of viral sensations like 'Gangnum Style' or Rebecca Black's song 'Friday'. They arguably had more cultural impact than 'Uptown Funk'. It's time we acknowledge these brave trailblazers and their undeniable contribution to the zeitgeist with an entirely new category: 'Meme of the Year'. Here're a few suggestions for meme-musos who totally deserve a golden gramophone.

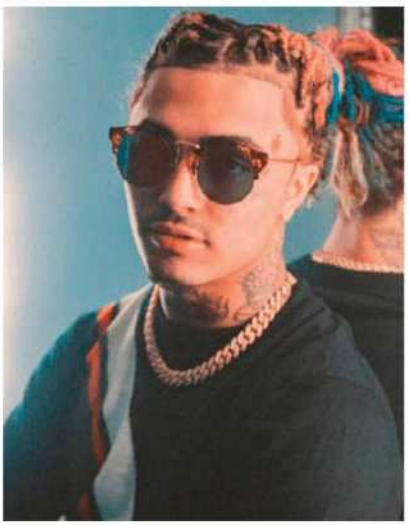
Michael Dapaah AKA Big Shaq

When he delivered lyrics like, "The ting goes skrrrahh/ Pap pap ka ka ka/ Skibiki pap pap/ And a pu pu pudrrrr boom/ Skya/ du du ku ku dun dun/ poom poom," Michael Dapaah, the London-based comedian-turned-viral rapper was destined to become a meme.

Big Shaq, formerly MC Roadman Shaq, became a viral sensation after his appearance on BBC 1XTRA's rap and grime segment Fire in the Booth. Everyone went nuts for his hilarious piss-take on the Grime genre and Big Shaq was born. He later expanded the freestyle into a full-length track, 'Man's Not Hot'; a comical, creative and ridiculously catchy tune about a London tough in Miami who refuses to take off his Puffa jacket.

Kirin J. Callinan

We can't let the yanks and Brits take all the meme glory. What about our own homegrown viral sensations? Kirin J. Callinan, whose music is a bizarre mashup of 80s-inspired tunes with a distinct flavour of self-parody and performance art, beamed into digital fame late last year after his song 'Big Enough' was picked up by *The Tonight Show* host, Jimmy Fallon – who thought the track was absolutely awful. Guess he didn't 'get it'? The 'Big Enough' video features Aussie rock legend Jimmy Barnes as a head and torso in the clouds, screaming at the top of his lungs for what seems like an eternity. It's incredible. If Bruno Mars is the musical equivalent of a Corolla, Kirin would be a 1990 Lamborghini Countach.



Lil Pump

Depending on who you ask, Lil Pump, the artist responsible for the song 'Gucci Gang', is the future, or death, of rap music. He's only 17 years old, but already he's rocketed to the front of a new style of rhyming called 'mumble rap'. Trying to understand his lyrics is harder than Chinese algebra, but when 90 per cent of the words used are "Gucci gang" and the others are gems like, "Spend ten racks on a new chain /My bitch love do cocaine, ooh", then we have to wonder if that really matters. Shakespeare, he ain't. But he is certainly a meme in the making. The video for 'Gucci Gang' has over 490 million views and has spawned countless parodies, many of which have views in the hundreds of millions themselves.

CHRISTIAN BALE

JOHN HURT

CHARLIZE THERON

FILM

PUSHUPS, PROSTHETICS AND PIZZA: PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATIONS ON THE SILVER SCREEN

IT'S award season again. Yes, really. Time to trot out what little tidbits you might be able to recall about this year's nominees for all those tedious lunch-break chats or, perish the thought, office betting pools. Well here's a hot tip. The only thing awards bodies like more than the acting itself is physical transformations. Whether that's done through weight modification, prosthetics, makeup or even learning a new physical skill, they all eat it up, and the more drastic the better. Have a look at some of these past examples.

Christian Bale, *Trevor Reznik – The Machinist* (2004)
Best Actor Nomination at the European Film Awards
Bale's physical transformation in *The Machinist* is almost legendary. Having beefed up to play Patrick Bateman in 2000's *American Psycho*, he had to lose a third of his body weight to play the gaunt insomniac Trevor Reznik. By eating only one apple and a can of tuna each day, and suppressing his appetite with cigarettes, he shed almost 30kgs – 10kgs more than nutritionists said was healthy. The weight loss was so extreme that reportedly his arse muscles lost their elasticity and fell off his hips during shooting in Barcelona.

John Hurt, *John Merrick – The Elephant Man* (1980)
Best Actor at the British Academy Film Awards
To take on the role of the disfigured title character, Hurt began his day at 5am, sitting for seven hours as the prosthetics and makeup, which were so delicate they prevented him from eating throughout the day, were laboriously applied. After shooting from midday to 10.30pm it took another hour and half to remove it all. Hurt said it was so arduous that he could only perform on alternating days, but the effort paid off. Not only did he come up for a series of Best Actor awards, winning a BAFTA, but makeup artist Christopher Tucker's work convinced the Oscars to bestow an award for Best Makeup in the years that followed.

Charlize Theron, *Aileen Wuornos – Monster* (2003)
Oscar for Best Actress in a Leading Role
Theron's turn as serial killer Aileen Wuornos was much more than just putting on a few kilos (14 of them, actually). To truly inhabit the role, as Theron set out to do, she fried and thinned her hair repeatedly to give it that over-bleached look, had washed-out tattoo ink airbrushed onto her skin to give it a blotchy appearance, partially shaved her eyebrows and wore a revolting set of fake chompers. Each of these changes came together to make Theron – a former model – look like a dead ringer for the real thing.

IF YOU'RE UNDER 40, YOU MIGHT LIVE FOREVER

IF you are reading this and you're under 40 – look after yourself. Don't contract any life-threatening diseases, dont let yourself get hit by a bus, or do anything stupid that might get you killed. Because if you can make it to the year 2050, according to highly-acclaimed futurologist Dr Ian Peterson, you will be able to live forever.

"There are quite a lot of people interested in living forever," explains Dr Pearson in an interview with *The Sun*. "There always has been, but the difference now is tech is improving so quickly, lots of people believe they can actually do it."

Dr Pearson believes there are a few methods, all within a technological hand's-reach, through which we may attain immortality.

RENEWABLE BODY PARTS

A team of British scientists made a significant breakthrough back in 2016 when they used 3D-printing technology to synthesise human tissue. A new technique involving the integration of 'micro-channels' delivers nutrients and oxygen throughout the tissue; a hurdle that previously prevented the printing of living organs of more than a 2-millimetre thickness.

Technological advances like these could help us to continue to rejuvenate, regenerate and renew our bodies. "No one wants to live forever at 95 years old", says Pearson. "But if you could rejuvenate the body to 29 or 30, you might want to do that."

I, ROBOT

In science fiction, the concept of uploading the human mind into a cloud-like server and downloading it into an android body is a mainstay of the genre. It allows authors to delve into a range of philosophical quandaries about the existence of the soul and what it means to be human.

Screw quandaries, though, because we want to live forever, and the nature of the human soul isn't going to get in the way. Dr Pearson believes that advances in robotics, specifically sex dolls, which he says are "starting to look quite human-like", will provide the first breakthroughs necessary for human immortality.

"Give them another 30 years development and they'll be extremely human-like," he says.

Of course, yet again, it's our insatiable need to find new ways to fuck that's driving technological advance.

Pearson says we'll be able to download our consciousness into a host of different android bodies. "You might even have ones of different genders and different ages, some old, young, female, male – there might be new genders by 2050 as well, so several other ones you can pick too."

GO VIRTUAL

Of course, if you didn't want to, you wouldn't necessarily even need to download your consciousness into a physical body. Once your mind is in the cloud, a virtual reality server dreamed up by you, or shared with other digital beings could be a perfectly pleasant place to live.

"If you're online all the time, you could have a fantastic life," says Pearson. "It would be all virtual, so you could have anything you want. Seventy-two virgins if that's what drives you; all of that, because it's totally imaginary."

Pearson presents a world of possibilities that stretch the imagination. "You could link your mind to millions of other minds, and have unlimited intelligence, and be in multiple places at once," he says.

The only issue that Dr Pearson can foresee is that, like most of the fun things in life, only the rich will have access to it – at least for the first few years.

"By 2050, it will only really be for the rich and famous. Most people on middle-class incomes and reasonable working-class incomes can probably afford this in the 2060s. So, anyone 90 or under by 2060.

"If you were born sometime in 1970 onwards, that would make you 48 this year. So, anybody under 50 has got a good chance of it, and anyone under 40 almost definitely will have access to this."

So, if you're reading this, and you're under 40, congratulations – you may be here for a whole lot longer than you thought. Just don't do anything stupid.

GAMING

REALITY SUCKS; I'M GOING VIRTUAL

WE get it. Dating is hard. And perhaps more so in Japan perhaps where the population is shrinking, young people are blamed for not having sex and men are getting married to videogame characters.

Yes, you read correctly. The nation that brought us wasabi, anime, sumo wrestlers, blurry porn and men dressed as schoolgirls, is raising eyebrows again with the release of *Niizuma Lovely x Cation*, a videogame that has the hallmarks of Japanese weirdness written all over it.

Niizuma Lovely x Cation is an adventure game/dating sim that challenges the player to put a ring on the finger of one of the three female characters, with the goal of eventually getting married – and they really mean it. The company behind the game provides wedding ceremonies where the players can marry with their in-game anime counterparts.

You take the role of Hibiki, our male protagonist, who has moved towns and caught the eye of three female characters. The creators said they made the game to help young men get more confident with relationships and the concept of marriage. Assuming you're competent enough to attract one of the in-game females, you may soon find yourself preparing for an actual wedding.

There's already one lucky man who's taken the plunge. In an online video doing the rounds, a *Niizuma Lovely x Cation* player is filmed marrying one of its anime characters. Dressed as a groom, he steps onto the podium where he is met by assistants who rig him up with a VR headset and bulky headphones. Once connected, an image of his virtual wife is projected onto the chapel wall. The virtual bride looks at him blankly with soulless digital eyes, they say "I do", then an assistant scurries onto the stage and presents a fake set of lips on a stick for the groom to kiss. We're not sure what happens after the ceremony, but the last we heard the groom was working on consummating his marriage.

DATING VIDEOGAME WEIRDNESS

HATOFUL BOYFRIEND

"Congratulations! You've been accepted as the only human student at the prestigious St. PigeoNation's Institute, a school for talented birds! Roam the halls and find love in between classes as a sophomore student at the world's greatest pigeon high school." In this game, you can fulfill your high-flying dreams of dating pigeons and shitting on people's heads. What more do you want, really? Go on, fly away.

BROTHER FALLS IN LOVE!

Who hasn't wanted to date an affordable, reliable printer? They'll never leave you for a better job in a better city with more printers that are a safer bet to start a family with – sorry, this got way too personal. Anyway, in *Brother Falls in Love!* your only goal is to date the new guy in school, a printer whose favourite colour ink is magenta. Also, this printer really loves to play soccer, so get ready to wrap your head around watching a printer jumping in the sun during an afternoon at the park.

LOVEPLUS

Spend hours with virtual crushes in the dating simulation game *LovePlus*. Spend real money buying your virtual dates flowers, taking them for dinners and making future plans. One man was so enamoured with his virtual crush he decided to marry her at a technology festival in Tokyo, becoming the first person to officially pledge his love to a videogame character.

POLITICS

THE FACES OF EUROPE'S FAR RIGHT

THE recent meteoric rise of nationalistic far right parties in Europe has stunned many observers. After all, this is the continent where nearly 80 years ago far right ideology lit a fire that consumed over 30 million people. While the scars of this fire are still visible today, fears around immigration, economic downturn and loss of national identity have helped political discourse lurch to the right, opening the door to these groups. As one expert told the *New York Times* late last year: "When fear grows, irrationality grows. That is at the heart of this new right-wing phenomenon." We look at six European politicians who have leveraged voters fears into political success and, in doing so, have helped shape the right-wing trajectory in an increasingly fragile Eurozone.

Geert Wilders
Party for Freedom (PVV)
The Netherlands

With his blond bouffant hair and penchant for conjuring controversy, it's easy to see why some have compared Wilders with Donald Trump. Wilders primary tactic is painting Muslims as a threat to Dutch identity, with his party campaigning to ban the Quran and close all mosques in the country, among other dog-whistle policies. In the process the PVV appears to have dragged the famously liberal Dutch to the right. In 2017, Wilders' party won the second most seats in the federal election, while several right-leaning parties using toned-down versions of his rhetoric gained ground. Although unable to form government, many say Wilders poses a continued threat in opposition, with his own brother warning that he'll be a "backseat fomenter of discord".

Gábor Vona
Jobbik (Right Choice)
Hungary

As head of Jobbik, Vona has tapped into classical fascism by mixing ethno-nationalism with anti-Semitism and anti-Roma rhetoric. He has since tried to back away from some of the extreme views of his party's past in an effort to attract more moderate voters, although the party platform is still obsessed with "eliminating gypsy crime" using "state-controlled involvement of voluntary organisations". That sounds a lot like re-legitimising his now-banned paramilitary group, which was known for provocatively marching through Roma villages. Nonetheless, poll watchers suggest his party will be the only one capable of challenging President Viktor Orbán in elections slated for April.

Marine Le Pen
Front National (National Front)
France

Le Pen, daughter of holocaust denier and FN's founder Jean-Marie Le Pen, has successfully deployed a "globalist vs patriots" rhetoric that has seen politics in France shift to the right, taking the party she inherited from the fringe to a mainstream option. Not that her party's policies have altered all that much in her time – she still wants to make it illegal for Muslim women to wear headscarves, ensure any public provision goes to 'native French' before immigrants, and take France out of the Eurozone. Combining this with a populist focus on working class issues saw her reach the two-party run-off stage for president in 2017. Despite losing, political analysts say her party will be well placed for the 2022 presidential election, and she remains perhaps the most prominent of Europe's far right figures.

Ilias Kasidiaris
Golden Dawn
Greece

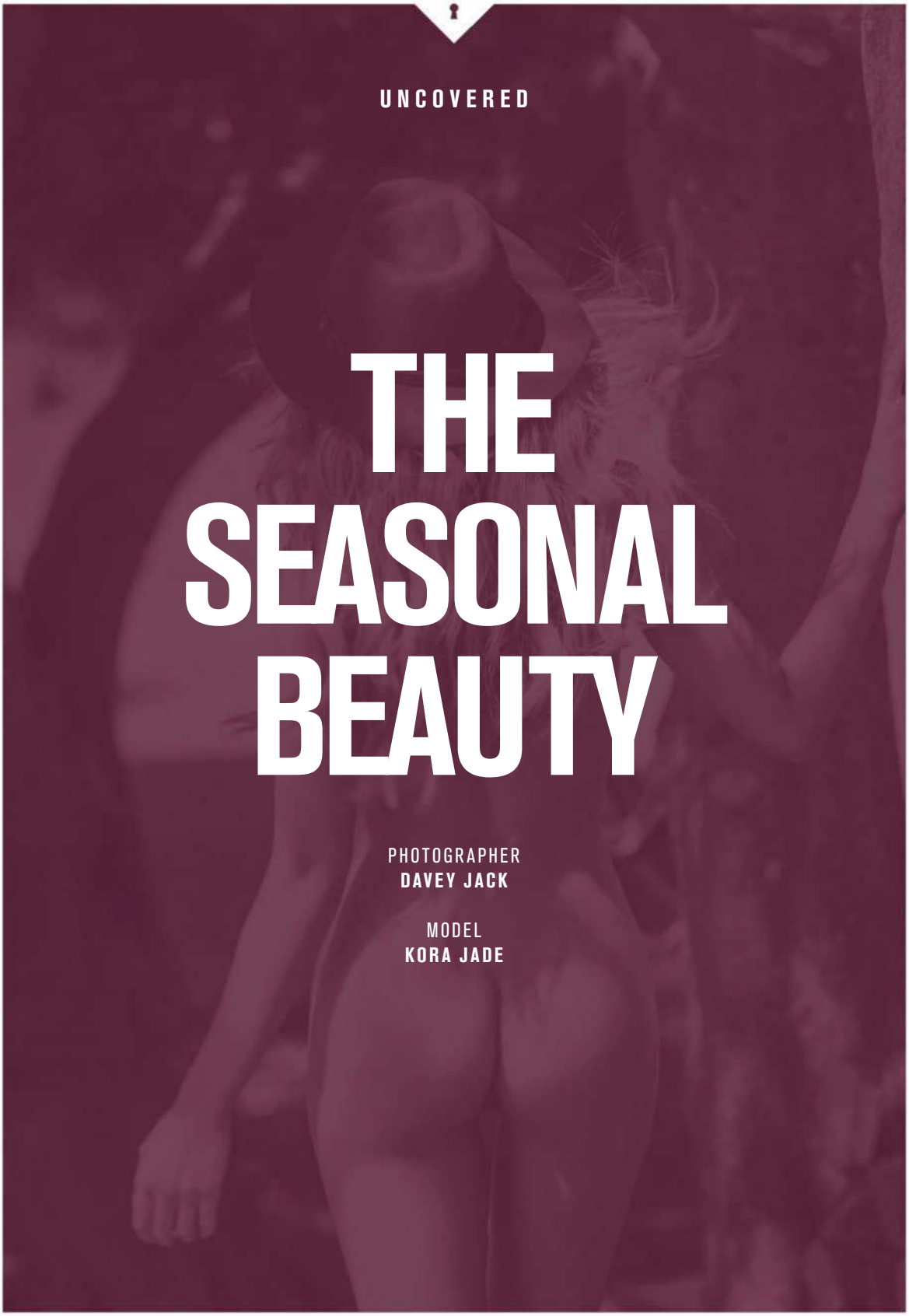
Nephew of Golden Dawn's founder, Kasidiaris is a spokesperson and heir apparent to the Nazi-sympathising party, although he is more infamous for his thuggish behaviour than anything he's done as a legislator in the Greek Parliament. Kasidiaris gained worldwide attention for slapping a female politician in the face during a morning TV debate. His party has been linked to hundreds of hate crimes against migrants, ethnic minorities and political opponents, including dozens this year alone, and its entire leadership, Kasidiaris included, is currently being prosecuted for essentially belonging to a criminal organisation. Despite this, Golden Dawn stubbornly holds the position as Greece's third largest federal party.

Matteo Salvini
Lega Nord (The Northern League)
Italy

Populist Salvini is considered by many in his country to be an unapologetic racist, having suggested closing all mosques to stop terrorism and suggesting the navy push boatloads of migrants in the Mediterranean back out to sea. His rallies, where supporters wave pictures of former dictator Benito Mussolini and flags featuring the black celtic cross symbol favoured by some neo-Nazis, have given some the impression that he is the most dangerous man in Italy. Under his leadership The Northern League is flourishing, and now will enter the March federal elections as part of a right-wing coalition, giving Salvini a very good chance of becoming Italy's next Prime Minister.

Alexander Gauland
Alternative for Deutschland
Germany

Gauland founded Alternative for Deutschland in 2013 on a Eurosceptic platform, but in recent years his party found support for its anti-immigration rhetoric as Germany struggled to cope with over 1.5 million refugees arriving over four years. While he particularly dislikes Muslims, saying "Islam has no place in Germany", he's also caused controversy by saying that while people may admire black footballer and German national team member Jerome Boateng, people wouldn't want him as a neighbour. Nonetheless, his party became the third largest represented in Germany's Bundestag in September 2017, winning 13 per cent of the national vote. Gauland said after the result that the party would use its new MPs to fight "an invasion of foreigners".

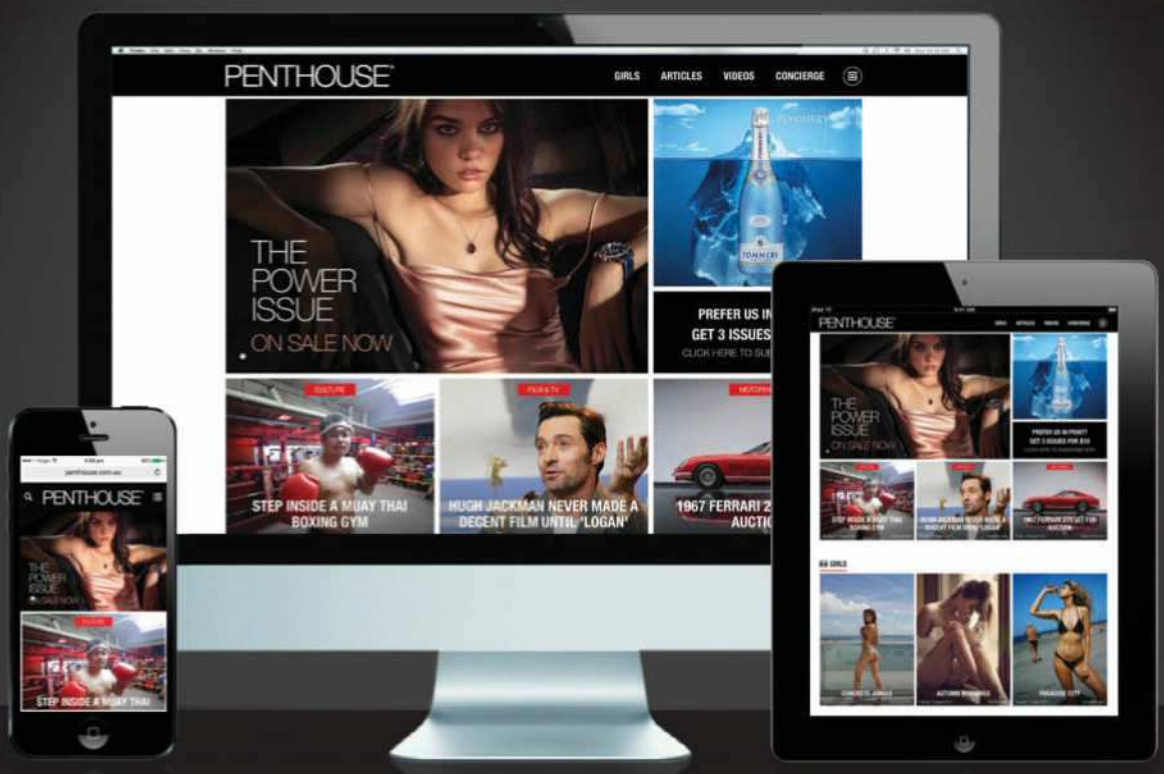


UNCOVERED

THE SEASONAL BEAUTY

PHOTOGRAPHER
DAVEY JACK

MODEL
KORA JADE



WELCOME TO YOUR NEW **PENTHOUSE**

PENTHOUSE.COM.AU

INTERVIEW

CHRIS HEMSWORTH

FROM SUPERHERO TO SPECIAL FORCES, AUSSIE LEGEND CHRIS HEMSWORTH ESCHEWS THE CARTOON HEROES FOR THOSE IN REAL LIFE.

MOVIEGOERS know Chris Hemsworth for his depiction of Marvel's godly superhero Thor. But the Australian actor trades his hammer for an M4 assault rifle as a US Army Special Forces captain in the action-packed war drama *12 Strong*. Hemsworth says it was a welcome change of pace portraying a real-life flesh-and-blood hero.

When the opportunity arose to depict the leader of the Green Berets, a small team of US Army Special Forces agents who took on a dangerous classified mission in war-torn Afghanistan following the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, he didn't hesitate.

Based on the book *Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of US Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan* by Doug Stanton, *12 Strong* recounts the story of the dozen soldiers who risked their lives to find and eradicate a large contingent of Taliban terrorists embedded in a remote part of the Middle East country. Weeks after the attack, the Green Berets were sent to work with the Northern Alliance, a somewhat fractured coalition of Afghan military leaders that came together to rid their country of the ruthless Taliban, to defeat the well-armed terrorists who outnumbered them five thousand to one. Codenamed 'Task Force Dagger', it was as much a diplomatic mission as it was a military operation. »

CREDIT: SUZY MALOY / THE INTERVIEW PEOPLE PHOTO: © 2017 WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

WE talked to Chris Hemsworth about moving from fictional heroes to real-life ones and what he learned about shooting this movie.

Were you looking for something very different after *Thor*?

I've done a lot of stuff in the comic book world and played fantasy heroes and, while it's been a lot of fun, I desperately wanted to do something more grounded, with some real heart.

Do you regard this Special Forces team as real-life superheroes? What appealed to you about *12 Strong*?

Absolutely. This script came along a few years ago and at first I couldn't believe it was a true story. I knew a lot about this conflict, this war – but, like a lot of people, not a lot about this mission. I was engrossed, shocked and fascinated by the details.

Did you talk to the Green Berets before the shoot?

Yes, I did. Speaking with them throughout the process, there's such an honesty and openness, a lack of dramatisation or ego, as they recounted these events with such humility. They're the real heroes. To put themselves in that position, putting themselves in harm's way, with their safety in jeopardy for the rest of our safety, is something beyond admirable. It's something that's inspiring and I felt was an honour to be asked to play this character and be part of this story. But I definitely felt the weight of that responsibility; I think we all did. I was very thankful that we had the real guys there along with this amazing cast and crew. We had Doug Stanton, this source of research, at our fingertips. It was an incredible experience, one that I'll remember for a long, long time.

What surprised you the most about this story?

The way they were able to adapt, evolve and embed themselves within this world and work with the local people – not against them – in fighting a common enemy. The brotherhood that they formed with the local Afghan people is something that kept coming up among all the guys I spoke to. The relationships they formed are as strong as any family bond they've ever had. That was something that was always inspiring and evident in their approach to why they did things. This movie is based on just one of the secret missions they had. There are so many others that we know nothing about. It

THEY WANTED US TO SHOW THE COLLABORATION OF THIS MISSION, AND THE HEART, THE BOND AND THE BROTHERHOOD THEY SHARED WITH THEM.

PHOTO: © 2017 WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. © 2017 - DISNEY/MARVEL

gives you an idea of how good they are at their job.

What do you think audiences will take away from watching this film?

A big thing I took away from this experience was the real guys talking about how important is was for them for their own survival when they first got there to convince the local people that were fighting together with that they weren't there to occupy the country. They were there to chase their enemy out.

What did you learn while making this movie?

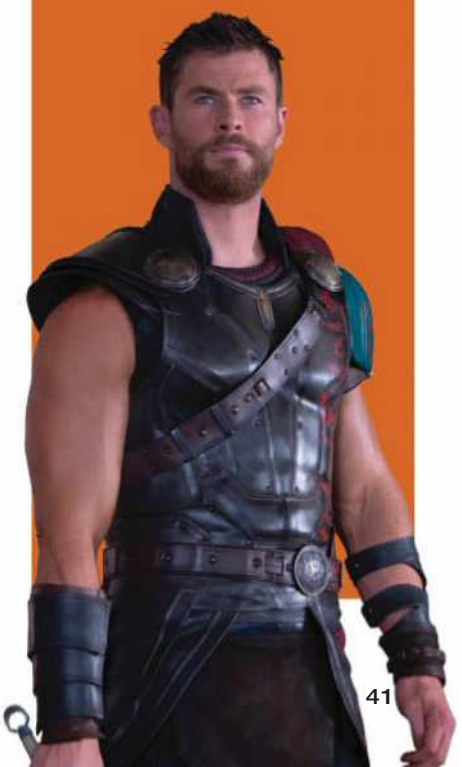
The extras we had working with us, Afghans who live in Albuquerque where the film was shot, they'd come up to us and say, "Thank you for telling this story because I was there, I fought with the Americans, but the whole world thinks I'm a terrorist." One man said he thought it was important for people to know that we are on the same side. The invading forces – the Taliban and al Qaeda – they're the ones who are coming in to take over and restructure the place. A lot of Afghan actors usually don't want to be involved in films like this, but once they knew that they would be depicted truthfully they couldn't get there quick enough. It meant a lot to all of us. It's certainly something the soldiers who had been there were concerned about as well. They wanted us to show the collaboration of this mission, and the heart, the bond and the brotherhood they shared with them.

What was it like working in the mountains of New Mexico?

Walking up a hill, my lungs were burning. We had these Gator Trucks that were driving people up and down the hill. Occasionally, I'd say, "It's cool, I'll just run up there." Then, within three steps, the mountain [indicates an almost vertical incline], and you've got all your gear on, and you're breathing heavy, and you're like, "Bring the truck back." So, we were in peak condition. We did three or four weeks of military and weapons training. For me, the most important thing was finding the chemistry and bonds that we formed. Obviously, getting the technical side of things right was a must but it's tricky to find that connective tissue that links all the exposition together at times – all those little moments and jokes and beats in – because it was a contribution by all of the guys there and our friendship that formed during that training.

THE GOD OF THUNDER

Hemsworth is best known in Hollywood for his role as the Marvel superhero Thor. Cast in 2011 by Marvel Studios, Hemsworth put on 20 pounds of muscle to play the crown prince of Asgard. Directed by Kenneth Branagh, *Thor* went on to earn $449.3 million at the box office. A sequel, *Thor: The Dark World*, was released in 2013 and saw Thor team up with Loki (Tom Hiddleston) to save the Nine Realms from the Dark Elves led by the vengeful Malekith, who intends to plunge the universe into darkness. The film received mixed reviews, but was a commercial success, grossing over $US644 million worldwide. In 2017, the final instalment of the Thor trilogy, *Thor: Ragnarok*, was released. Directed by the talented Taika Waititi, Thor finds himself in a deadly gladiatorial contest that pits him against the Hulk, his former ally and fellow Avenger. Thor's quest for survival leads him in a race against time to prevent the all-powerful Hela from destroying his home world and the Asgardian civilisation. Grossing over $852 million, *Thor: Ragnarok* is the highest-grossing film of the series and by far the most entertaining.



SUBSCRIBE AND RECEIVE A FREE GIFT FROM BILLY BONES

UPDATE YOUR AUTUMN WARDROBE WITH A FREE BEANIE (PICTURED) FROM THE GUYS AT BILLY BONES CLUB, WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE FOR ONE YEAR TO PENTHOUSE. SUBSCRIBE FOR TWO YEARS AND RECEIVE A CAP! CHECK OUT THEIR FULL RANGE AT WWW.BILLYBONESCLUB.COM

SUBSCRIBER BENEFITS

SAVE up to $144.20

FREE delivery to your door

DISCREET packaging

GREAT gift idea

FREE *Billy Bones Club* item, valued at $34.95

PENTHOUSE

YES, Please send me *PENTHOUSE* for:

☐ 2 years (16 issues) for $95.00 plus FREE CAP **SAVE $144.20**

☐ 1 year (8 issues) for $49.95 plus FREE BEANIE **SAVE $69.95**

MY DETAILS:

Title: Mr/Ms _____ (First name) _____ (Surname)

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Phone: ( ) _____

Email address: _____

GIFT RECIPIENT DETAILS:

Title: Mr/Ms _____ (First name) _____ (Surname)

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Phone: ( ) _____

Email address: _____

PAYMENT DETAILS:

I enclose my cheque/money order for $ _____
payable to Penthouse.

Or charge my credit card:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Diners Club ☐ American Express

Card Number: __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

Exp date: __ __/__ __

Cardholder's name: _____

Cardholder's signature : _____

ORDERING IS EASY!

ONLINE: penthouse.com.au

CALL: 136 116

MAIL POSTAGE-FREE TO:
Magshop, Reply Paid 5252, Sydney, NSW 2001

Please tick if you don't wish to receive future offers from ☐ Penthouse ☐ specially selected partners. Offer for Australian residents only and ends 13.5.18, or while stocks last. Product will be sent to subscription payers, separately to the magazine, within 30 days. Full privacy policy and T&Cs at magshop.com.au/penthouse

M1804PNT

TOSHIBA
CHEVROLET
Kodak
Kodak
VORNADO
MARQUIS

THE REPORT

INFO WARS

WHO CAN YOU TRUST? **BEN BOHANE** REFLECTS ON THE STRANGE NEW MEDIA WORLD WE ALL LIVE IN NOW, PART OF THE GROWING SURREALITY OF LIFE IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

CREDIT: SCHALKM

THERE was a time when escapist themeparks like Disneyland were a place you visited, leaving reality behind the front gates as you shadow-boxed Mickey and Minnie Mouse on the way in.

Today, it's hard not to feel like we've all been sucked into a permanent dystopian version of the park – like Banksy's Dismaland – where the dividing line between truth and fiction, reality and fantasy, is becoming all too blurred. Now we're all permanently trapped in the themepark, handcuffed to a Ghost Train rollercoaster ride, looking for media signposts to guide us out but finding confusion and collusion instead.

Australians' trust in media is at an all-time low, reflecting a time when alternative facts have become a thing and the traditional newsroom is dead. It's not just media either – a 2017 poll by the *Trust Barometer* by Edelman, the world's largest PR company, noted Australia was increasingly pessimistic, with trust in media, politics, business and NGOs at record lows.

"We're talking about a trust crisis that is causing a systematic meltdown," reckons Richard Edelman, head of the PR company, as reported by Fairfax. On another front, atomic scientists have moved the Doomsday Clock closer – we are now at two minutes to midnight because "international diplomacy has been reduced to name calling, giving it (my italics) a *surrealistic sense* of unreality that makes the world's security situation ever more threatening," they intoned gravely.

Or you could take less scientific reasons, such as this recent story from *VICE*: 'We are truly fucked: Everyone is making AI-generated fake porn now'. Porn is at the cutting edge of tech so when an app was developed that seamlessly transplanted well-known faces onto writhing porno bodies (Princess Leia – really?), it doesn't take much to wonder at the real-world implications of using this with politicians or other public figures. Soon we won't just be dealing with fake news but fake people with fake voices on our screens – and we won't be able to tell the difference.

LEGACY MEDIA IS BLEEDING WHILE EVERYONE NOW FANCIES THEMSELVES A PUBLISHER THANKS TO FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM AND PERSONAL BLOGGING.

We have Russia producing fake news to help get Trump elected and we have China infiltrating our politics, universities and media to obfuscate the growing surveillance state it has become (have you heard about their plans to 'rate' every citizen according to a social score?). Australian media, consolidated in the hands of a few owners, is dumbed down to the point where much of our once august institutions are reduced to *BuzzFeed* headlines and clickbait. Foreign bureaus are closing when now more than ever we're in need of an Australian perspective on foreign affairs. And suckering us into this blue-pill world is Trump, a man-child who's suddenly made all us inhabitants of Earth captive to his chaotic new reality TV show.

We're all in this pea-soup of propaganda and vested interests, which prompts the question – how did our media hell-scape come to this? Who can we trust? Media observers point to the fact that Facebook and Google account for more than 80 per cent of global ad revenue, suffocating independent media and the little guys who rely on local ad revenue to stay afloat. It has resulted in mass lay-offs of journos and photographers at all our big media companies. Others point to the growing atomisation of our media diet, now delivered in Facebook scrolls and two minute videos. Nobody under 50 watches the nightly news anymore because we are jacked into the system all day – and yet we are poorer for it.

Legacy media is bleeding while everyone now fancies themselves a publisher thanks to Facebook, Instagram and personal blogging. Problem is, the idea of an editor has been devalued and everyone thinks their latest brain fart deserves equal weighting to an op-ed in the *The Wall Street Journal*. The issue is not so much around ubiquitous fake news and disinformation, but rather we are drowning in too much actual information – much of it good – and endless personal communication.

There's no time to stop and think anymore.

Then you have the Murdochs of the world, trying to kill off public broadcasters like the BBC and ABC so we can be fed a personal brand of Truth. And helping them is a millennial generation so absorbed in "identity politics" that it can't see the bigger picture. For all its faults, the ABC remains a pillar of our democracy – who will keep the bastards honest without the rigour of investigative programs like *Four Corners* or consumer protection shows like *The Checkout*? You'll never see them on a commercial network and if you think that is a good thing then I suggest you settle down in Somalia, North Korea or even the US for comparative results.

I've witnessed the way technology has evolved too in the 30 years I've been scribbling for various magazines, and it is easy to riff on McLuhan's famed line that "the medium is the message". So what is the message now that internet platforms have taken over? I'd say it is now less about access to information so much as all of us swimming in a sea of data we don't know how to manage or own. We got a hint of what was to come not long after 9/11, when America's National Security Agency (NSA) said, quite publicly, that they had created a program called Total

CREDIT: © 2016 PARAMOUNT PICTURES. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

ARCHITECTURE ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF ADVERTISING:

GHOST IN THE SHELL (2017)

The Sci-fi film starring Scarlett Johansson, takes place in a futuristic city in which almost every surface is covered in holograms the size of a skyscraper, each and every one an advertisement.

SHIDAX
BIC DRUG
カラオケ&パーティー館
カラオケ館
HOTEL GRACE
TOHO CINEMAS
IMAX
CENTRAL ROAD
DEADPOOL
MARUHAN
KABUKI
KONOMI YAKI
トラノコ
カラオケ

LIVE
FOR
STOMP
swatch

Information Awareness whose goal was…well it's all in the name isn't it? Somehow "Orwellian" doesn't quite do it justice, not to mention the occult symbolism of its logo; an all-seeing eye hovering above a pyramid that basically says, 'Fuck you minion, we know everything you've said, everything you've done and we own you.'

Facebook and Google are hoovering all our data that winds up feeding the spooks and targeted marketing companies. We are indeed in a Big Brother age where "if the service is free, then you are the product". If Facebook were a bank or oil company, it would have been broken up long before now by anti-competitive laws.

Over the years I've watched the evolution of news gathering and tech, from my early days punching out stories on an electric typewriter in the late 80s and the marvels of fax machines. I worked at *Stiletto* magazine in this analogue era, reliant on landlines, photos from negative film, bromides and lots of literal cut and paste to design the mag, before the term took on a new meaning. Our French Art Director wielded a scalpel, glue, typeset and poor hygiene to make each issue a real, physical object, handmade you could say: this was the DIY zine era.

On assignment in late 1989, covering Vietnam's military withdrawal from Cambodia, I marvelled at the wire agency boys filing stories on mobile phones the size of bricks, and transmitting photos from suitcase-sized scanners with their mobile darkroom. There were times in Asia when I posted my feature stories by snail mail to magazines in Australia. I can't say I ever used courier pigeons, but in 1992, covering the Muj takeover of Afghanistan, I found myself at the Hotel Kabul, sending out stories on an ancient telex machine that had probably been in use since the 50s.

The pace of innovation and transmission is dizzying, but has it actually improved our cognitive understanding of issues or just added to the noise and bewilderment? Sometimes you're better off concentrating on old-world tech like, say, a book. It seems with our lowered concentration spans, we are now drowning in information and data but, ironically, without the analytical tools to make sense of it all, the context of history that previous generations found in – yes – books. Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, published in 1776, is arguably a better guide to guessing where Trumpius Maximus and modern America will go than our 24/7 news cycle or *Breitbart News*. There's a reason why the smartest people in the world still make time to read books every day.

It has become commonplace for people to say, 'You can't trust mainstream media' and 'it's too biased,' but there is an onus on consumers to educate themselves too, using quality sources of information. Sorry, but there's no pride in ignorance, and it's too easy to be manipulated by an increasingly sophisticated political and media machine. Do politics and media before they do you.

Clues as to the kind of psychological space we are entering might be gleaned not from futuristic Silicon Valley, but from late stage communism, as the Soviet Union began falling apart. Everyone knew the system was ludicrous, but because they knew of no other system from decades of propaganda, everyone played along. Film-

THE PACE OF INNOVATION AND TRANSMISSION IS DIZZYING, BUT HAS IT ACTUALLY IMPROVED OUR COGNITIVE UNDERSTANDING OF ISSUES OR JUST ADDED TO THE NOISE AND BEWILDERMENT?

maker Adam Curtis highlights this in his excellent doco *HyperNormalisation*, and there are scary parallels to the age we now find ourselves in. Just as the Soviets kept their population in a constant state of uncertainty to keep them febrile and malleable, so too it seems our own masters have now upped the 'psy-ops', making modern life so weird you lose track of reality. When *RT* (formely *Russia Today*) seems credible and *CNN* propaganda, then you know things have flipped.

In his doco, Curtis narrates:

The (Soviet) plan had run out of control. But rather than reveal this, the technocrats began to pretend that everything was still going according to plan and what emerged instead was a fake version of society. The Soviet Union became a society where everyone knew that what their leaders said was not real because they could see with their own eyes the economy was falling apart. But everyone had to play along and pretend it was real, because no-one could imagine any alternative. One Soviet writer called it HyperNormalisation: you were so much a part of the system that it was impossible to see beyond it, the fakeness was "hyper normal…"

After the next financial crash, after new national internet firewalls are in place by our own authoritarian governments, when journalism is criminalised, or worse, made irrelevant, we might have to reach back to a pre-internet age to remember a time when the fourth estate was able to speak unfettered truth to power, maintaining a cogent framework of reality as history unfolds. A time when we were not swamped by cat videos, drip-fed status updates and infotainment masquerading as news. Then, if all else fails, we can always return to the one constant in 3,000 years of information sharing – books and pamphleteering. If we don't wipe ourselves out, then next gen Siri will probably tell us what's going on.

CREDIT: ISTOCK

Daily News
RAIN TODAY
FAKE NEWSHH

OPINION

A MATTER OF TRUST

CAN THE CRISIS OF THE OLD MEDIA BE SEEN AS A REPERCUSSION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GROWTH OF THE INTERNET?

BY BRENDAN O'NEILL

IN Manhattan recently, I saw a billboard ad for CNN. It has a picture of a glistening red apple with the words: "This is an apple."

"Some people might try to tell you it's a banana", the ad says. "But it is not a banana. This is an apple."

It's a little pompous. Not to mention patronising: as if people's minds are so easily commanded by the likes of Trump or some other fact-lite foghorn of a politician that they could be made to think an apple is a banana.

Which is why it made me chuckle that some New Yorker has taken a black marker pen to the ad and written in huge letters: "FAKE NEWS."

You gotta love New York graffitists.

For me, this defaced ad, this haughty self-promotion by CNN, brought down a peg or two by a pissed-off citizen, sums up the crisis of the media.

Our faith in traditional news outlets, in those old gatekeepers of info, is corroding.

Last year, a survey found British people's trust in the old media was at an "all-time low". In 2016, 36 per cent of Brits trusted the media; last year it was 24 per cent.

Australians also have "record-low" trust in the media: the Edelman Trust Barometer revealed in February that just 31 per cent trust the media.

Last year, a Harvard survey found that 65 per cent of Americans think the mainstream media publishes fake news. So it isn't only Trump who barks "fake news" every time a reporter opens his mouth – millions do.

Public doubt about the old media hasn't translated into happy-clappy faith in the new media.

One in four Brits think getting your news from social media is a risky business. Across the West, people are concerned that social media is stuffed with fake stories and mad claims. And they aren't wrong.

In recent months there seems to have been an upward blip in trust in the old media as people's faith in the virtual media has been shook. But don't get excited, hacks: the general trend is that trust in your output is shrinking.

This is freaking out people in authority. Politicians and journos are concerned that your average Joe no longer believes that his morning newspaper is giving him an accurate take on the world. That's if Joe even buys a newspaper.

But is this crisis of trust such a bad thing? Might it not be seen as positive, possibly rebellious, an act of scepticism on the part of the public, towards those who – as that CNN ad suggests – presume to know everything about everything?

Perhaps this crisis is also an opportunity. An opportunity for us to rethink how news is done, who gets to forge public opinion, and whether the truths the elites have been telling us really are true.

Officialdom's meltdown over 'fake news' brings to mind the hair-tearing reaction to the development of the printing press in the 1500s.

Back then, the 'truth' – that is, books approved by the Church – could only be published by clever monks. The rest of humanity didn't have a hope in hell of publishing their views, or anything.

Then the printing press came along, leading to Bibles for everyone, books, pamphlets and the Protestant Reformation.

MELTDOWN OVER "FAKE NEWS" BRINGS TO MIND THE HAIR-TEARING REACTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRINTING PRESS IN THE 1500S.

The old elites were horrified. And terrified. This new media would pump out half-truths, they said. It would pollute people's minds with garbage. There would be an "outbreak of heresies".

Sound familiar? We're living through a modern version of this moral panic about 'heresy' (or fake news, as it's now called) overriding 'truth' (or the old media, which is what they really mean when they say 'truth' today).

When Germany threatens to outlaw fake news, and Britain promises to educate all schoolkids about it, they sound like that Medieval elite disgusted by the rise of print and the damage it did to their role as protectors of truth.

Yes, we live in confusing times. Yes, it would be nice if we trusted the media more. But let's not fret too much about this.

The crisis of the old media can be seen as a repercussion of the revolutionary growth of the internet, which has given billions of us a printing press in the palm of our hands, and the ability to publish our thoughts at the press of a button.

Of course, that will lead to some bullshit being aired. But it also loosens the stranglehold of the old arrogant makers of opinion, and gives the masses their say. That's exciting – right?

SPORT

F1 2018: FAST AND FURIOUS

FORMULA 1, THE WORLD'S MOST GLAMOROUS SPORT, IS READY TO BLAST-OFF FOR ANOTHER YEAR. STEWART BELL DRAWS UP THE BATTLE LINES.

THIS is going to be a huge year in Formula 1. At the front of the grid, sparks will fly again as Mercedes and Ferrari lock horns, with Red Bull Racing set to re-join that headline skirmish. There's new races, new faces and new-look F1 cars, care of cockpit-protection device Halo. All the right ingredients are there…

But it has got a lot to live up to. Last year was a great one for the sport, bordering on a classic, with Mercedes' superstar Lewis Hamilton becoming a four-time F1 World Champion. The Brit defeated title rival, Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel with a strong run through the season's second half for nine wins overall and points at all 20 rounds. But he's already looking ahead.

"Four is a great number, it is part of my racing number 44 but I want five now," said Hamilton, his aim to equal the great Juan Manuel Fangio.

"The worst feeling I had was after Baku, because I think ruined the race with something unnecessary, so I struggled with that," said Vettel.

Then came Singapore and the most dramatic moment of the season, with Vettel causing a huge startline crash that left not only his title bid in tatters, but also took both Ferraris out of the race at a first corner – a first in F1 history.

And the shockwaves were felt all over the world.

"The race that made me jump out of my chair was Singapore," exclaimed Nigel Mansell, the 1992 F1 World Champion.

"That was the defining moment of last year. Mercedes wasn't favourite to win that GP and it was handed to Lewis on a plate."

No doubt a wet start for the 10th edition of the race – the first-ever at the famed city-state since 2008 – contributed. But polesitter Vettel moved too far left at the start to protect his lead against Red Bull Racing's Max Verstappen, sandwiching the Dutchman with his teammate Kimi Räikkönen. The multi-million dollar pile-up immediately ended the race for the three drivers.

"THE RACE THAT MADE ME JUMP OUT OF MY CHAIR WAS SINGAPORE," EXCLAIMED NIGEL MANSELL, THE 1992 F1 WORLD CHAMPION

"Just the other day, I was reminiscing about growing up in Stevenage [England] and watching TV and dreaming about being in F1. Here we are, 25 years on and I'm four-time world champion."

And while there's no doubt Hamilton earned his fourth crown, putting him level with F1 icon Alain Prost and Vettel, the latter and Ferrari cost themselves a better shot at it with a series of reliability issues and errors of judgement… sure to be a source of pain for a long time to come in Maranello.

Vettel's meltdown during a chaotic Azerbaijan Grand Prix made world headlines, after he drew alongside Hamilton, and deliberately bumped into him to retaliate for what he thought was brake testing under the safety car. He was handed a 10-second stop-go penalty for it and, while many felt it wasn't enough, the incident weighed heavily on the German.

And Singapore will continue to feature in the minds of the drivers ahead of the season-opener in Australia, as the benchmark required for pre-season fitness: to tackle the toughest race on the calendar.

For the fans, it's an epic experience with constant racing action care of F1 and other exotic machinery, trackside parties, race-themed activities, and loads of live performances from some of the world's biggest music acts.

Last year's decade edition line-up was one of the best ever, with headline acts including global DJ sensation Calvin Harris, pop superstar Ariana Grande, synth-pop veterans Duran Duran, US

2018 F1 CALENDAR HIGHLIGHT: SINGAPORE

It's the perfect cure for the winter blues. Balmy nights, racing under lights and the top international artists performing on stage – all in one of the world's great cosmopolitan cities, complete with unlimited shopping and dining options. The Formula 1 Singapore Grand Prix never fails to deliver.

The whole city comes alive for it, ensuring you can have lots of fun sightseeing during the day, before heading to the track to watch F1 cars thread the barriers at up to 320km/h.

The stats alone tell the story of its global popularity, with an average of 250,000 spectators attending the event each year since 2008, and more than 470 million more watching on TV globally.

Daniel Ricciardo says it's a no-brainer for his fellow Aussies. "Logistically, it's fairly convenient, but it's also a cool race. There are not many night races. There's a lot going on in Singapore. It's just a good atmosphere I think

pop rockers OneRepublic, American DJ duo The Chainsmokers, British singer-songwriters Seal, and Lianne La Havas, and spoken word performer George the Poet. This year's line-up is yet to drop.

For the drivers, on the other hand, it's a brutal test of human endurance with cockpit temperatures reaching 55 degrees Celsius at racing speeds, made only worse by three layers of fireproof clothing and a helmet. So it's no surprise the drivers will lose up to 3kg in fluid over a two-hour period.

"It's the one race where the drivers look battered when they get out of the cars," said F1 commentator Martin Brundle, an ex-driver of 158 Grand Prix starts.

One Singapore specialist is Australian F1 driver Daniel Ricciardo, with the Red Bull Racing driver having stood on the podium every year since 2014.

"The past few years I've put emphasis on Singapore with my training and my preparation before that," said Ricciardo.

"So that's an area of the sport that I feel like I thrive off. I'm not saying I'm the fittest guy on the grid, or the only guy that trains, but when it comes to the kind specific training I feel like I am definitely putting in what I have to, and making sure I'm prepared as well if not better than anyone.

"But, if a driver does not quite take some of those really physical races seriously, if they're out enjoying their weekends more than they should, then I definitely feel it will show."

Drivers and fans alike will also need to adjust to the new-look F1 cars, in the form of new cockpit-protection device Halo, which has been designed and tested by the sport's governing body, the FIA, to deflect debris away the car and further protect the drivers.

And while the Halo has divided the sport even before its race debut, the safety benefits it's bringing are huge. For not only is it able to withstand 15 times the static load of the full mass of the car, but it'll also significantly increase the net protection against small debris. Incredibly, the visibility for the drivers is unaffected.

On-track, 2018 is expected to be intense; frontrunners Mercedes and Ferrari likely to be challenged by now Aston Martin-backed Red Bull Racing from the opening round in Australia – where Daniel Ricciardo will be the focus.

It's a crucial campaign for the Perth-born driver, who is in the final year of his contract with Red Bull. He must show strongly against his teammate Max Verstappen, who outquaified him 1–3 last season, as the next contract he inks is crucial to his world title hopes.

"I feel that I've been ready [for a world title campaign] for a few years, so I want it to happen soon," Ricciardo said. "Ideally it happens in 2018, but if it doesn't, I've got to try and make it happen."

Behind the top three, a brutal midfield bloodbath likely led by Force India, and its combative pairing of fiery Mexican Sergio Pérez and highly rated young gun Esteban Ocon.

From there, predictions get tough: with Williams still yet to confirm its second driver; McLaren powered by Renault after splitting with Honda; Renault's own works squad on the rise in the strong driver pairing of Nico Hülkenberg and Carlos Sainz; and Toro Rosso running Honda engines, and two young drivers in Pierre Gasly and Brendon Hartley.

American squad Haas has retained Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen for stability in its third year, while Swiss outfit Sauber has a new title partnership with Italian marque Alfa Romeo, and will run F1's top rookie prospect Charles Leclerc alongside Marcus Ericsson.

All of it ensuring F1 2018 is going to be one of the sport's best seasons yet, the action kicking-off in Melbourne on March 25.

"IT'S THE ONE RACE WHERE THE DRIVERS LOOK BATTERED WHEN THEY GET OUT OF THE CARS," SAID F1 COMMENTATOR MARTIN BRUNDLE

The 2018 FORMULA 1 SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX will be held from September 14-16, with more information at singaporegp.sg

CONFIDENCE

IS POWERFUL

miraDry®

IS CONFIDENCE

EST. 2014

MAN CAVE

SYDNEY

ANDREW LUCAS

INSTAGRAM
@ANDREW_LUCAS

TWITTER
@LUCAS_TUDIO

WEBSITE
LUCASTUDIO.COM.UA

ÁNDREW Lúcas is an independent art photographer from Ukraine. He is one of the top 20 art photographers in Russia. He tells us about his career, his artistic process and his passion for nude photography.

When did you start taking photos?
I held my first public exhibition in 2009; it was a signature year for me. I'm very sentimental about it. Even now, I often re-post the works that I collected for that exhibition. I do not consider my best image as the one that I'll take tomorrow. I love them all as if they were my children.

What makes a good photo?
An image is successful only when it is connected. When pleasure from a glance is more sublime than desire for the model.

Other than nude, what styles of photography do you enjoy?
Among photography styles, I also love landscapes and underwater photography. I can stare at masterpieces for hours, like some boy, swallowing saliva from admiration and envy. Many of my works are far from the nude genre. I do not hide them, but they aren't prominent in my body of work.

How would you describe your photographic style?
My works generate different, often opposing views from respected professionals. What I mean is that the question of my style is an area for the critics to explore. It's for them to characterise my work. I do not try to fit someone's idea of art; I do not hold a line of predictable behaviour.

Tell us about your process.
A photograph can be neither a result nor a start for a long story. I am not a professional – I make nearly nothing to order. Whatever comes out is the result of high and low points in my life, which has its own scale, dynamics and direction. For me, it's not hard to make images. I just live and document my life, my own story and myself.

Nothing starts from the void. Even if we can't verbally characterise or explain something, the subconscious is at work: it reacts to our skills, upbringing and feeling. This work is like sowing grains into the fertile soil of a garden. If all the ingredients come together right, you'll be guaranteed a crop. It just takes time and senses, even fleeting moods, and then you can grant your viewers your story and they will have their own interpretations.

SCUDERIA GRAZIANI
CARS & LIFESTYLE

AUSTRALIA'S LEADING SUPPLIER OF FINE AND RARE MOTORCARS

90 - 94 Crown Street, Woolloomooloo, NSW 2011

1300 080 388

WWW.SCUDERIAGRAZIANI.COM

Triumph & Disaster
NOTHING SAYS ANTI FUCK'N AGING LIKE IGGY FUCK'N POP
gameface
MOISTURISER
CRÈME HYDRATANTE
by Triumph&Disaster
Net 3.4 fl oz 100ml
triumphanddisaster
triumphanddisaster.com.au
triumphanddisaster

FLYING HIGH

LEARN HOW TO FLY | THE BIZARRE WORLD OF CRYPTOCURRENCY | GLOBAL TRAVEL IN EXOTIC AND DANGEROUS LOCATIONS

POCKET ROCKET

BLACKSHAPE PRIME

POTENTIALLY the coolest Light Sports Aircraft we've seen, due mostly in part to the fact that its seating arrangement reminds us of *Top Gun*, Italian company Blackshape have pushed the LSA category design to its limits with its Blackshape Prime. With a carbon fibre structure, low wing configuration and low fuselage, the elegant lines of this aircraft are also highly functional for maximising performance.

This is the LSA plane you buy if you've got the need – the need for speed. And loop-de-loops.

STATS

PRICE: STARTING AT (APPROX.) A$220,000
WINGSPAN: 9.96M
ENGINE: ROTAX 912 ULS (100BHP)
TOP SPEED: 305KM/H
SEATS: 2

D-MEUT
220
200
180
160
140

POCKET ROCKET

BRISTELL LSA

THIS is what you're going to get if you want a Light Sports Aircraft with all the trimmings. Czech aeronautics company Bristell saw a gap in the market to cater to an opulent clientele who wanted to take to the skies in style. From paintwork to cabin-trim, the Bristell LSA is all about customising the look and feel, so that longer cross-country flights can be done in comfort. Often aesthetics are the last thing considered in the field of aviation, so if you're the type to order your Bentley a year in advance so that it has time to source the perfect kid leather for your steering wheel then you'll love the whacky interior colour and material combinations Bristell has to offer.

STATS

PRICE: STARTING AT (APPROX) A$160,000
WINGSPAN: 9.13M
ENGINE: ROTAX 912 ULS (100BHP)
TOP SPEED: 250KM/H
SEATS: 2

POCKET ROCKET

JABIRU 170-D

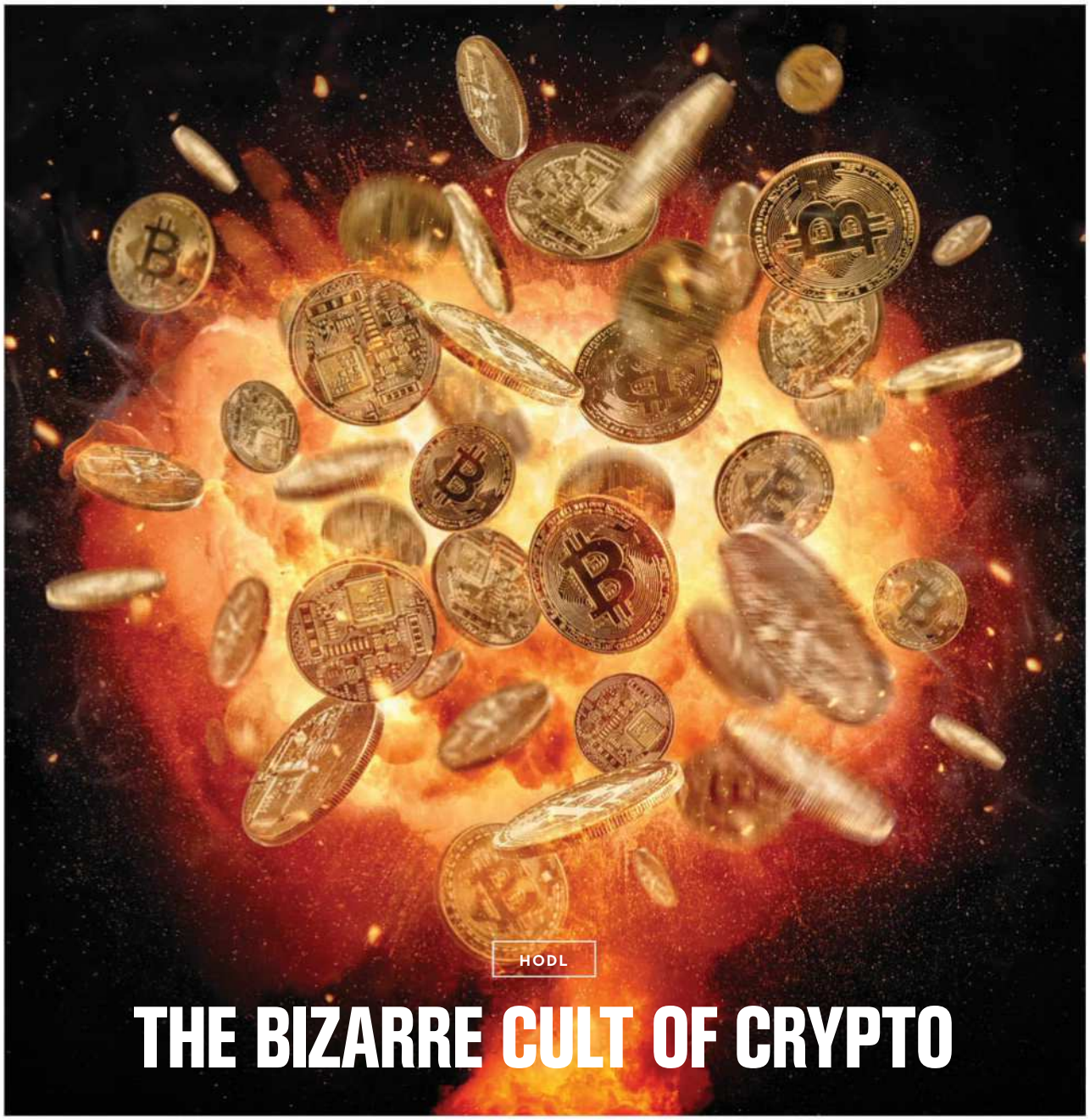
THE easiest entry-level aircraft for getting above the clouds in Oz, the Jabiru 170 comes in at a scrape under $100k. With a slightly longer wingspan than the company's smallest aircraft, specially designed to get you off the ground faster in hot conditions (read: you want the 170 model if you are planning on flying it down under). This also provides greater stability in rough conditions if you're flying cross-country, and is overall a lot of bang for your buck if you're looking to get into Light Sports Aircraft as a hobby.

Everything you need to leave the tarmac comes as standard, and there are plenty of options for a few extra bucks that include custom paintwork and leather seats.

STATS

PRICE: STARTING AT A$98,550 ($74,400 IN KIT FORM)
WINGSPAN: 9.6M
ENGINE: JABIRU 2200 (80BHP)
TOP SPEED: 250KM/H
SEATS: 2

PAUL ANTHONY
paulanthonylabel.com



HODL

THE BIZARRE CULT OF CRYPTO

WRITING anything about the current state of cryptocurrency for a print publication is an almost futile concept. By the time this makes it to the editor's desk, let alone the printer, the market could have fluctuated enough to mint a fresh set of billionaires or broken the hearts of an entire breed of risk takers and financial daredevils.

"HODL" could well become the 2018 word of the year. It's a mantra for the handful of traders who've turned themselves into theoretical millionaires overnight. A deliberate misspelling of "hold", intended to elicit the idea that it's been typed in a panic, it's proffered to remind their brethren that, no matter what the market is doing: Do. Not. Fucking. Sell.

The "Crypto Crackhouse" is one of several dedicated buildings in the states that hosts a new breed of trader. Gone are the cocaine-powered, braces-sporting cowboys that dominated Wall Street in the late 80s – this is an entirely different type of trader.

A few blocks away lies the "Crypto Castle". Much of a muchness, these urban fortresses of fiscal fanaticism are essentially financially driven reincarnations of the many "Projects" that popped up when Neil Strauss was writing *The Game*, but instead of teaching pitiful saps how to pull women via verbal trickery, they're a hotbed of huge monetary gains offset by crippling loss, depending on how the market is performing that day, hour or minute.

However these new cowboys play the game with no discernible rules, their living situation belies the underlying, single rule of the entire cryptic, crypto world.

"HODL."

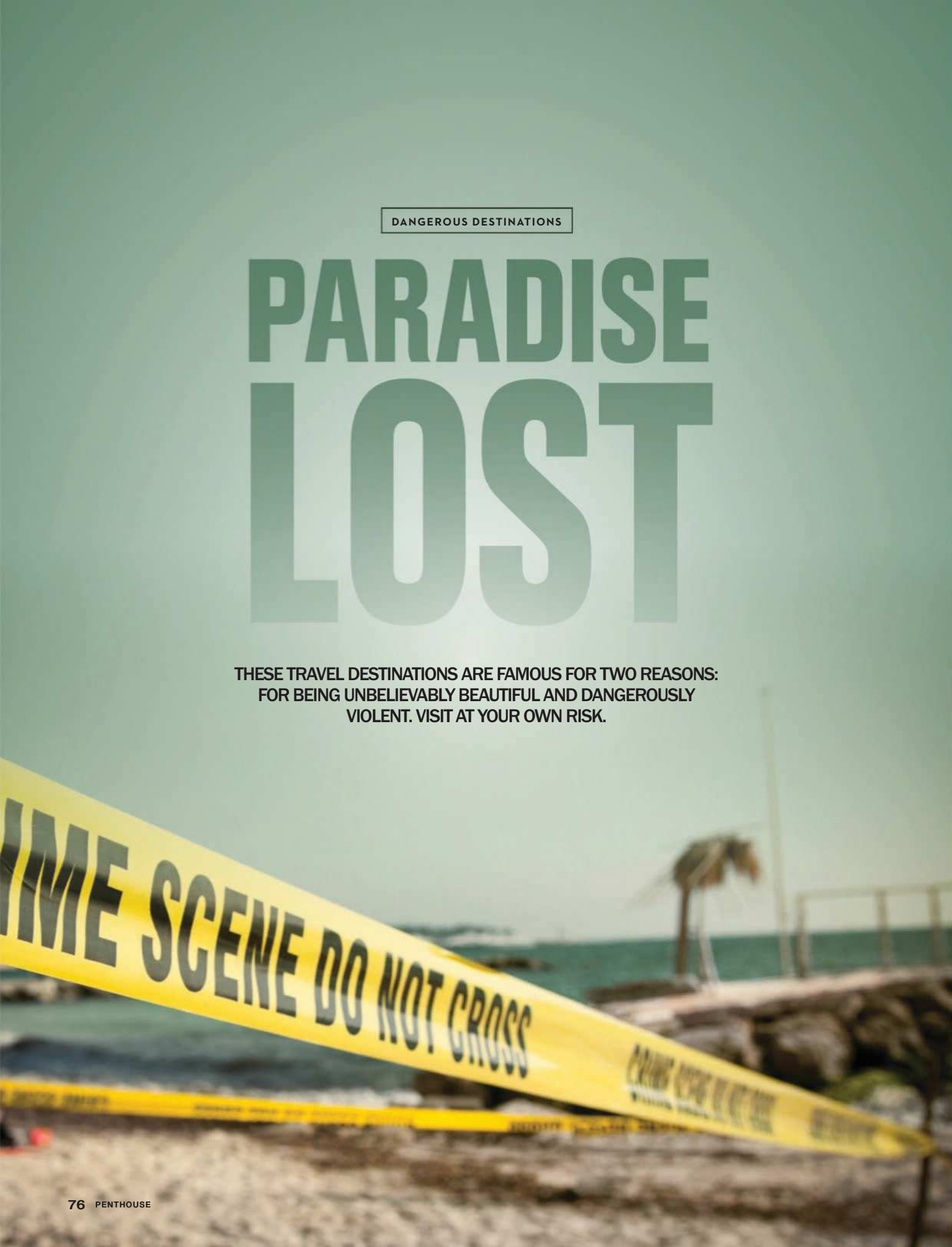
Just. Don't. Fucking. Sell.

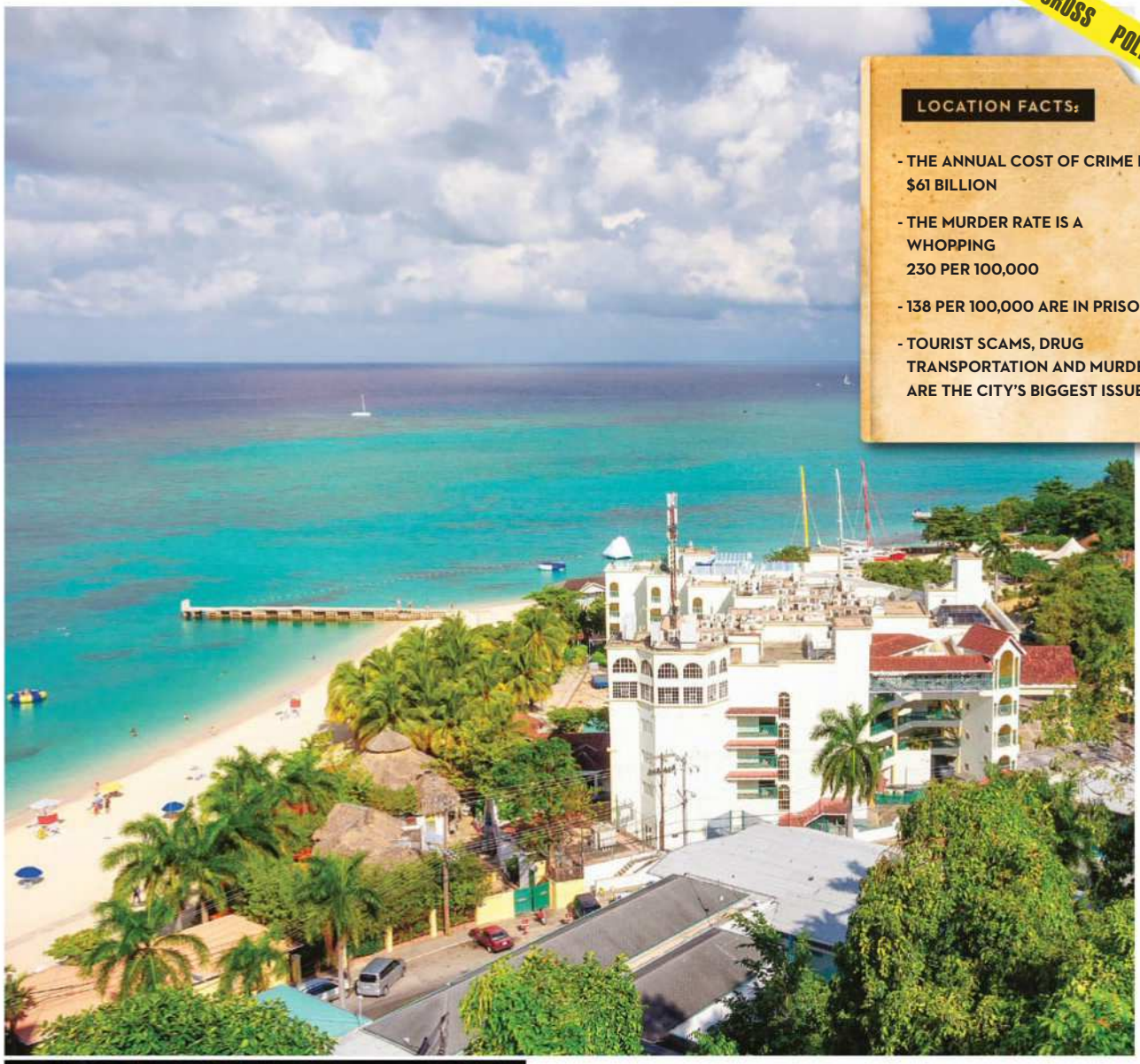
CREDIT: JAG_CZ

DANGEROUS DESTINATIONS

PARADISE LOST

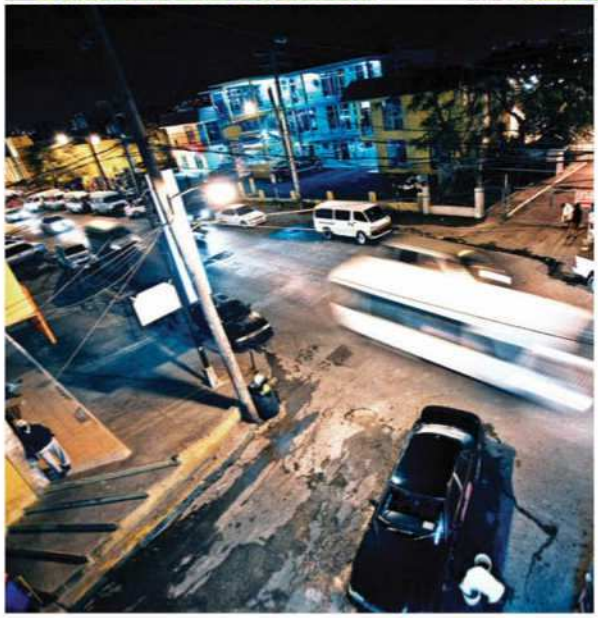
THESE TRAVEL DESTINATIONS ARE FAMOUS FOR TWO REASONS: FOR BEING UNBELIEVABLY BEAUTIFUL AND DANGEROUSLY VIOLENT. VISIT AT YOUR OWN RISK.





LOCATION FACTS:

- THE ANNUAL COST OF CRIME IS $61 BILLION
- THE MURDER RATE IS A WHOPPING 230 PER 100,000
- 138 PER 100,000 ARE IN PRISON
- TOURIST SCAMS, DRUG TRANSPORTATION AND MURDER ARE THE CITY'S BIGGEST ISSUES



MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA

SPIRALLING out of control in the past 12 months, Montego Bay is the tropical-paradise-turned-nightmare-deluxe that's recently made headlines for its violently anarchistic ways. The beaches, though lined with some of the most exquisite resorts in the world, are now no-go zones after dark, with strict curfews in place; a concerted attempt by local officials to stipend the sharply rising murder rate.

While the murder rate may be the highest per-capita in the world, it's the general petty crimes of the entire country that are most worrisome to the tourist population. Stolen wallets, phones and general belongings are all commonplace, whether by sticky fingers or at knifepoint. Almost every travel advisory board suggests to exercise caution in Montego Bay, and rightly so. It's also a huge gateway for Colombian cocaine making its way to the states.

But look at the pictures. It's just so goddamn beautiful.

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

LOCATION FACTS:

- STREET CRIME IS THE BIGGEST CAUSE OF HEADACHE FOR TOURISTS
- BOGOTA HAS A RANDOM WILD HIPPO POPULATION, LEFT BEHIND BY PABLO ESCOBAR'S PENCHANT FOR EXOTIC BEASTS
- BULLET HOLES AND SHRAPNEL MARKS ARE STILL FOUND IN SOME AREAS AFTER THE DRUG WARS THAT PLAYED OUT IN THE EARLY 90S
- SCOPOLAMINE, FROM THE DATURA PLANT, IS A DRUG USED TO TURN VICTIMS INTO ZOMBIES THAT WILL DO ANYTHING THEY ARE TOLD

COLOMBIA as a whole is one giant criminal fuck-up in the grand scheme of things. Don't get us wrong, it's one of the most beautiful places on Earth; the birthplace of an entire fictional genre, fantastical reality, in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novels, this place creates some of the greatest stories of all time, both fictional and real.

It only makes sense, then, that the capital would be such a hotbed of contentious crimes. While the days of Pablo Escobar's well-documented terror may be behind the proud nation, cocaine is still a hot-ticket item for the country's criminal economy, and where cocaine goes, other crimes follow.

Harassment, kidnapping and straight up murder still plague the capital city of Bogota, despite years of (albeit failed) governmental efforts to somehow quell the trade, that sates the rest of the world's hunger for the highly enjoyable (erm, so we've heard) California Cornflakes. You know what? Just watch *Narcos*.

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

HAIR metal stalwarts Kiss may have dubbed it Rock City in their eponymous tune about the place, and they weren't entirely wrong. At the time. The once-great "Motown", however, is now famed as a cesspool of local crime, and despite its heyday as the birthplace of Chess Records (think Muddy Waters, Chuck Berry and Etta James), the slow and sad death of the car production industry left the city with the famous skyline in a state of financial ruin.

While the overall crime rate has been on a steady decline in the city since the early '80s, when it was a particularly dangerous city, the real problem that underlies the high murder rate is the fact that over 80 per cent of homicides are committed using a firearm, which automatically classifies them as violent crimes.

Though industry is returning to the area, as well as a more conscientious effort from government and law enforcement to see the numbers drop, Detroit remains one of the most dangerous places in the USA, no matter how impressive a backdrop its buildings strike at night.

LOCATION FACTS:

- THE HIGHEST MURDER & VIOLENT CRIME RATE IN THE STATES
- THE MURDER RATE IS SO HIGH IT'S CONSIDERED A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE
- DETROIT WAS ONCE THE HIGHEST INCOME PER-CAPITA CITY IN THE US, BUT IS NOW ONE OF THE POOREST
- "DEVIL'S NIGHT" IS THE NIGHT BEFORE HALLOWEEN AND, IN DETROIT, THE WEIRD CELEBRATION GENERALLY LEADS TO WIDESPREAD ARSON

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH Africa's thoroughly beautiful coastal playground is also the backdrop for some seriously scary statistics, and unlike many other places, there doesn't seem to be one particular crime *a la mode.*

The open-slather nature of South Africa's criminal culture is alarmingly, well, shithouse. Rape, assault, home invasion, petty theft and of course, murder, are all commonplace, and young men in particular are indoctrinated into gang culture at an early age. Different numbers tattooed over the body indicate what role a member plays within the major "Numbers Gang" criminal enterprise: 26 if you deal with money, 27 if you deal with blood, and 28 if you're a rapist.

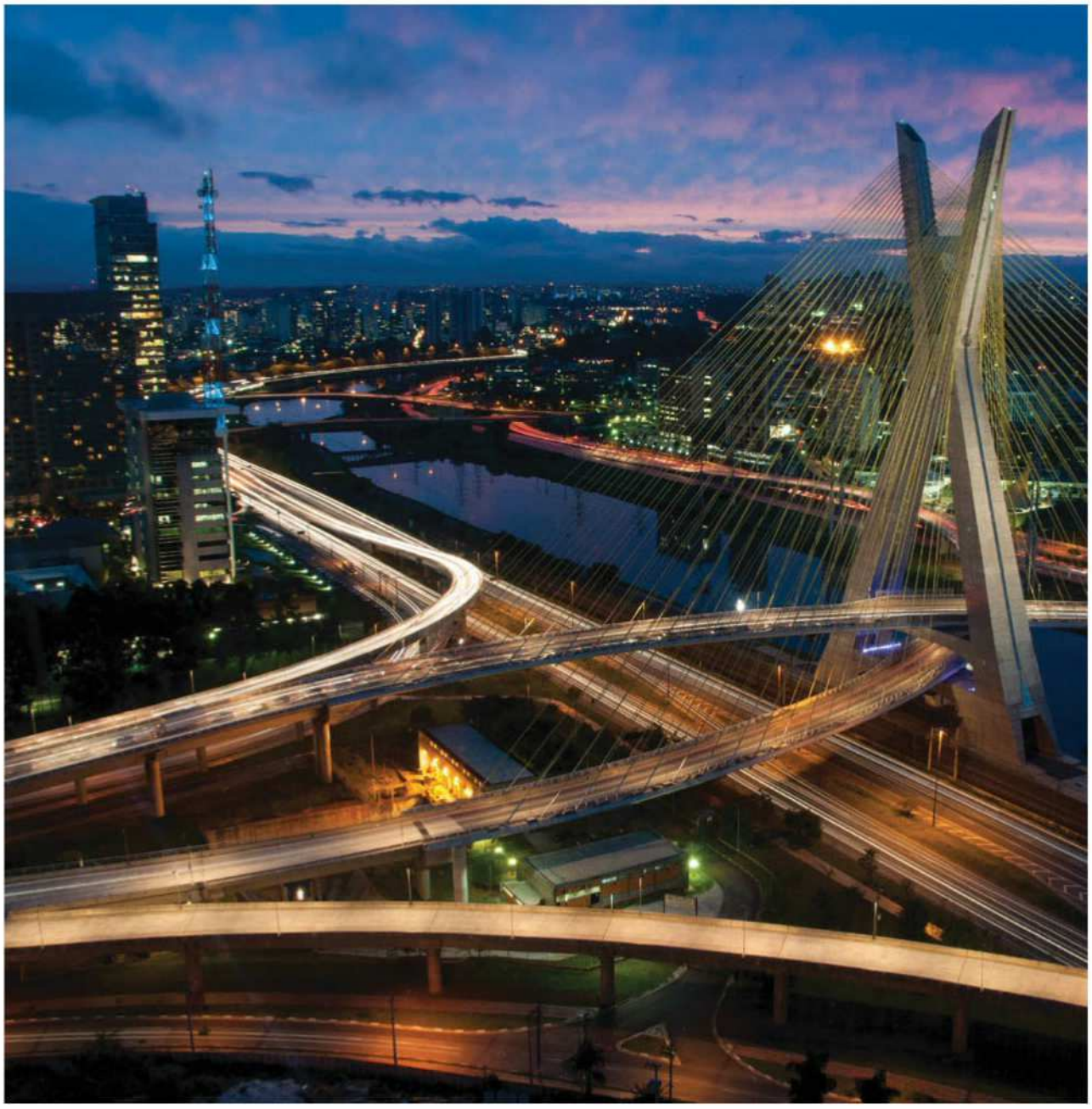
Despite this epidemic of criminal conduct, Cape Town remains a favourite amongst European travellers, and was last year voted the number one tourist destination for the fifth year in a row by *Telegraph UK*'s readers.

Despite an increase in jobs and a slowing rate of population growth, the murder rate has risen a whopping 40 per cent over the past decade.

And they have those awful accents.

LOCATION FACTS:

- THE 26'S ARE THE MOST DANGEROUS GANG IN SOUTH AFRICA, AND OPERATE MOSTLY IN CAPE TOWN
- STABBINGS ARE VERY COMMON, EVEN MORE SO THAN GUN VIOLENCE
- THERE'S A LOT OF DRUG ABUSE, AND DRUGS ARE VERY CHEAP, BUT POOR QUALITY, AND OFTEN CONTAIN RAT POISON
- THE FIRST TOWNSHIPS FORMED IN CAPE TOWN, AND ARE THE SOURCE OF MOST OF THE CRIMES IN SOUTH AFRICA TO THIS DAY



SAO PAOLO, BRAZIL

WHEN you're looking at global murder stats you can detect one easy trend with little to no effort: where there's cocaine, there's crime.

Brazil as a whole sees over 150 murders a day on average, and the capital city Sao Paolo is in no way sheltered by its urban landscape.

While many of the drug superhighways operate as clandestine set ups, using the cover of night to import and export huge amounts of the white stuff through largely unmonitored rural regions, major cities along the way attract the activities of the bad guys who run the routes, and these guys like to party the old fashioned, dangerous-as-fuck way.

Sao Paolo is a sprawling metropolis with a massive tourist population, plagued by petty crime. While the murder rate is arguably low (at least compared with the rest of the nation), muggings are aplenty, and visitors are urged to proceed with caution.

LOCATION FACTS:

- ARMED STREET ROBBERIES ARE THE HIGHEST THREAT TO TOURISTS
- ONE OF THE FEW SOUTH AMERICAN CAPITALS WITH A GROWING CRIME RATE
- BIZARRELY, THE BRAZIL PRISON SYSTEM ALLOWS FOR FURLOUGHS, WHICH SEES CRIMINALS RELEASED FOR THE HOLIDAYS, WHICH CAUSES A SPIKE IN CRIME OVER DECEMBER AND JANUARY

AUTUMN MORNINGS

PHOTOGRAPHER
BEN TSUI

MODEL
ISA LANGNES

INSTAGRAM
@BENTSUIPHOTOS
@ISALANGNES

WE talk with Norwegian model Isa about her passion for travel, modelling and fitness. Her favourite place in the world right now is California, but hopefully as she continues to travel, we'll eventually see her here in Australia. She mentioned sun, beaches and palm trees are a priority for her. We have plenty of those – so get yourself over here, Isa.

Where are you from?
I'm from Norway, but right now, I´m living out of my suitcase.

What did you do before modelling?
I studied acting for a couple of years and I worked as a visual merchandiser in a clothing store.

Did I read somewhere that you also worked in a pizza place?
Kind of… I took orders over the phone for a pizza company.

In all those photo shoots you see with beautiful women lying around in sexy lingerie, eating pizza in bed… is it a prop, or does the pizza actually get eaten?
I can´t speak for everyone else, but I eat it.

What have been some of your modelling career highlights?
Being able to travel, meet incredible people and do what I love.

Are there any photographers you'd love to shoot with?
I've always wanted to shoot with Damon Baker – I love his work. Ellen Von Unwerth is also incredible – the list of good photographers is endless.

What inspires you to pick a place to travel to?
Since I've spent most of my life in Norway, my main focus when travelling is sun, beach and palm trees.

What are your favourite places to travel to?
My favourite place in the world right now is California. But there're a lot of exotic places I would love to visit in the future.

How do you maintain such an incredible figure?
I try my best to work out when I can. I eat healthily and I love to run or walk as exercise.

KETOLOGIC™

FUEL YOUR BEST™

WHAT IS YOUR OBJECTIVE?

- Lose Weight?
- More Energy?
- Feel Better?
- Better Mental Focus?
- Sleep Better?
- Fuel Your Best?

KetoLogic BHB, a great tasting & convenient fuel source for those on a low carb ketogenic diet.

- All natural - Zero sugar.
- Fuel physical & mental performance.
- Boost Ketones.
- All natural, no artificial sweeteners, flavours or colours.

KetoLogic Meal Replacement is a delicious fuel source for those on a low carb or ketogenic diet.

- Anchored by coconut oil & MCT's.
- University Studied.
- Supports ketone production.
- All natural, no artificial sweeteners, flavours or colours.

START TODAY

1. Ketologic Meal Replacement
2. Eat Healthy
3. Ketologic BHB
4. Get Moving!

Australian Distribution - Collective Nutrition Pty Ltd · sales@collectivenutrition.com.au · Ph: +61 738 079 085 · www.collectivenutrition.com.au · @team.collective

FEATURE

MINE, NOT YOURS

MOST OF THE NEWS COMING OUT OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA TODAY IS ABOUT THE REFUGEE CRISIS ON MANUS ISLAND. BUT 1,000KM SOUTHEAST OF MANUS ON BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND, A LITTLE-KNOWN STORY ABOUT THE BLOOD-SOAKED 40-YEAR-LONG INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE OF A QUARTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE IS APPROACHING AN ENDGAME.

BY IAN LLOYD NEUBAUER

CUT from the pages of a glossy travel brochure and just smaller than Hawaii's Big Island, Bougainville is blessed with incredible natural resources: sugar-white beaches, fisheries, hyper-fertile soil and one of the largest untapped mineral deposits on the planet – copper, silver, gold and uranium estimated to be worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

The largest known concentration of minerals lies in Panguna Mine, a vast hole in the ground in the Guava Mountains of central Bougainville. Between 1972 and 1989 it provided nearly half of PNG's GDP and made billions in profit for its operator, Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL), a former subsidiary of Rio Tinto.

But while less than one per cent of those profits were reinvested in Bougainville, hundreds of millions of tonnes of tailings – the toxic by-product of industrial mining – were dumped straight into rivers, turning vast tracts of once-fertile farming and hunting grounds into barren, moonlike wastelands.

1

INFORMER

IN the late 1970s, a landowner group led by Francis Ona presented BCL with a multi-billion dollar cleaning bill. BCL, however, claimed it was in compliance with the law while concurrently insisting it had not damaged the environment. It continued to dump tailings into the rivers like a careless tourist might drop a cigarette butt on the beach.

In 1988, push finally came to shove. Ona and his mob broke into BCL's storerooms, stole a bunch of explosives and blew up Panguna's power lines. The event marked the start of the longest conflict in the South Pacific since WWII and the world's first successful eco-revolution – an episode of military history that has drawn parallels with the 2009 James Cameron film *Avatar*.

PNG sent in its army to crush the rebels, pitting Australian-supplied helicopter gunships and gunboats against a ragtag militia armed with slingshots and homemade rifles. When that failed, soldiers trained their sights on the general population, burning down villages, using rape as a weapon and executing alleged collaborators en masse. And when that failed PNG applied a cruel Australian-backed naval blockade, depriving the entire island of fuel, medicine and all contact with the outside world.

By the time a lasting peace agreement was signed in 2001, 15,000 to 20,000 Bougainvilleans – 10 per cent of the population – had been killed or succumbed to illnesses. For its woes, Bougainville was granted autonomy and tacit control of its fantastic mineral wealth, including the US$50 billion worth of copper and gold left at Panguna.

Now, a new-look independently listed BCL is plotting its return to Panguna, promising jobs and prosperity for all – despite not lifting a finger to clean the mess it left behind. Astonishingly, the Autonomous Government of Bougainville is courting the proposal because it desperately needs cash for an independence referendum scheduled for June 2019 and the prospect of running the world's newest country the following year. But many Bougainvilleans hold serious grudges against BCL and warn if the company returns, war will follow.

"ONE NIGHT DURING THE WAR, THE PNGDF WOKE UP EVERYONE IN MY VILLAGE AND MADE US STAND IN A LINE WHILE THEY BURNT ALL OUR HOUSES. I HOLD BCL DIRECTLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT HAPPENED."

HAPPY VALLEY

During the 'good times' of the 1970s and 1980s, Arawa and its port Kieta, an hour's drive from Panguna, was the second richest town in PNG. Hotels, restaurants and banks lined Happy Valley, Kieta's dreamy beachfront strip, while cruise boats and sail craft crowded around the old yacht club.

All that remains of Kieta today are ruins overgrown with jungle and the wrecks of two small steamships at the end of a pier where Queen Elizabeth II and her royal entourage disembarked during a state visit in 1974. Arawa hasn't fared much better; its wide boulevards lined with overgrown fields, stain-coloured apartment blocks and abandoned gas stations.

In Arawa I meet Philip Miriori, former private cabinet secretary of rebel leader Francis Ona, who died in 2005. Today Miriori is chairman of the Special Mine Lease Osikaiyang Landowners Association (SMLOLA), a group of 2,000-odd landowners who under the new Bougainville Mining Act hold rights not only to the topsoil but also the minerals underground. That makes Miriori one of the most powerful men in Bougainville and his opinion of BCL a matter of concern.

"BCL does not have any compassionate feelings. I have seen what they are capable of," he says. "One night during the war, the PNGDF (PNG Defence Force) woke up everyone in my village and made us stand in a line while they burnt all our houses. I hold BCL directly accountable for what happened that night because BCL provided the soldiers with funding, logistics and shelter. Not as long as I am alive will I ever accept BCL coming back."

Allegations of BCL's complicity in Bougainville's war stem back decades and have been corroborated by the highest level of government. In 2011, SBS's *Dateline* unearthed an affidavit signed by former PNG Prime Minister Michael Somare that reads: "Because of Rio Tinto's financial influence in PNG, the company controlled the government." In a separate affidavit, former PNGDF general Jerry Singirok said the army "functioned as the corporation's personal security force and were ordered by BCL to take action to reopen the mine – by any means necessary".

BCL refused to comment for this story. But in a shareholder update released in October, the company claims it "has always maintained positive relationships in Bougainville" and "continues to respectfully build relationships with a range of stakeholders, including project area landowners".

Yet in the very same document, the company scolds Miriori for "attack[ing] BCL through the media by using the title of SMLOLA chairman to convey the misleading impression that there is a united view of opposition to BCL".

The notice also refers to a SMLOLA leadership dispute between Miriori and his cousin Lawrence Daveona, whose relationship with BCL stems back decades. Daveona was once president of the Bougainville Development Corporation, a purported BCL development fund that was run like a Fortune 500 company with interests in engineering, logistics and even mining. He was also a former director and secretary of BCL's Roads Mine Tailings Lease Trust Fund – a body set up to administer compensation payments to Panguna landowners.

Daveona refused comment, citing ongoing court proceedings with Miriori. But he pointed out Miriori has a corporate sponsor of his own: RTG Mining, a Perth-based consortium that operates seven mines in five countries and is challenging BCL's bid to reboot Panguna.

Miriori acknowledges he's on RTG's payroll but says his support for the company is based the award-winning environmental and social policies it has demonstrated at Masbate, the largest operating gold mine in the Philippines. "RTG will work well with the community," he opines, adding: "If this story doesn't go well, you will not be welcome back in Bougainville."

LEGACY PIT

In BCL's October shareholder notice the company claims it is "increasing its presence in central Bougainville through the engagement activities of our local team".

Yet BCL has no official presence in Arawa. And it's hard to imagine how a car with BCL logos could get past Alex Dakamari, a crusty old rebel with hangdog features who controls Morgan's Crossing Checkpoint – a roadblock set up by Ona in the early 1990s on the only carriageway leading up to the mine.

"BCL are wasting their time. If they come back, we will fight," Dakamari scowls. "We don't want the mine reopened – full stop! Otherwise, all our money will go to white people like in the past. We were the owners and they turned us into beggars. They can't get away with it again!"

Before it closed, Panguna was the largest open-cut mine in the world – 2.5 kilometres wide and half a kilometre deep. On one side of this titanic-size eyesore, a wall of untreated tailings hundreds of metres high marches slowly down a ravine. Millions of litres of opal-blue water rush from pit water drains on either side of this wall, forming waterfalls of the damned that lay waste to all life in the valley far below.

Dapera is a village that once sat right on top of the mine. In the early 1970s, BCL moved Dapera's residents to a squatter settlement built on a plateau of crushed rock not far from the ore-sorting plant. A desolate collection of hardscrabble

shacks, Dapera II is now home to a few hundred impoverished landowner descendants like Jayden Frankie.

"You can see the destruction BCL did to this community," he says. "Before my father had good land. This is not good land. We can't grow crops and when heavy rain falls, rocks in the ground turn blue and green."

His friend, Richard Onio, voices similar sentiments. "To find good land for farming we have to walk up to those hills," he says, pointing to a steep ridge. "But it's dangerous in heavy rains because of landslides."

What do they think about the idea of a BCL comeback?

"They would not be welcome," says villager Freddy Bernora. "We would send them off. They stole billions of dollars from us and I do not see how this company has changed."

Frankie says he wants RTG to reopen the mine: "We have seen some pictures of how RTG works in the Philippines, how people there live side-by-side with mining. They showed us how they produce benefits for landowners. They seem to respect landowners."

"For me," says Onio, "I am with neither RTG or BCL. I am neutral. I want to see if they meet our terms and conditions. I am not convinced by either side yet."

CAESAR'S PALACE

On another plateau above the pit lies a small city where BCL housed more than 2,000 employees during the 'good times'. Today, around 8,000 landowners and squatters reside in the concrete skeletons of residential towers Ona and his mob set fire to after BCL withdrew. Masked in heavy fog, carpeted in moss and spattered with graffiti, it has the look and feel of a set from the *Planet of the Apes*.

Philip Takaung, Ona's 77-year-old half-brother and Miriori's deputy, is Caesar of this post-apocalyptic world. With the frame of a silverback gorilla and a crushing handshake to match, he makes an intimidating presence when I find him congregated with family and friends on the top floor of the tallest tower.

"When BCL came here and started polluting our land, we didn't know anything about minerals. We had no education so they took advantage of us," he says. "When we asked them to clean up the rivers, they did a feasibility study and said there was nothing poisonous in the water. We said NO! Our crops, our rivers, everything is dead! But they ignored us. They ignored us for 10 years until we took action. I was on that team with Ona that blew up the power lines."

Takaung shows me his weapon of choice during the conflict: a nine-foot-long pole with a Y-shaped head known as the 'Rambo Stick' – a slingshot so powerful it can puncture a hole in a car, or take off somebody's head. "This weapon is very good because it makes very little noise," he says. "When you fire it, the enemy has no idea where you are. Then you can fire again."

I ask Takaung how many soldiers he killed during the war. He looks at two small children in the room who are glued to his every word, decides against answering and continues with his sermon: "BCL burnt our villages. They tortured our people. They cut off people's hands and threw them from helicopters. They raped our women, the young children, the men and old ladies! They put the machete in between women's legs! I saw it! They slaughtered people like they were animals!"

On the way back to Arawa I stop at Anewa Bay, home to Bougainville's modern port facilities.. There I meet port worker Francis Baubake, a withered old man in his fifties with a wooden leg and a terrible story to tell.

"In 1996, the PNGDF got a new mortar bomb that was untested. So they tested it on my family, " he says. "We were in church in a refugee camp in Buin in the south when it hit us. My daughters Brenda and Alvina, seven and 12, and my wife Sicilia were instantly killed. I lost my leg," he says, tapping his wooden stump.

I ask Baubake who he holds accountable for his loss. He stares numbly into the middle distance and thinks for a while before mumbling: "The PNGDF. The PNGDF and BCL."

But when I ask what might happen if BCL returns to Bougainville, he answers without pause. "War," he says, grinding his teeth. "War."

THE NO-MINING VOTE

On my fourth day in Bougainville, I am struck with malaria and spend the next 24 hours shivering in bed, my joints and lower back burning with pain. The fever dissipates the next day but the experience makes me ponder the fate of an estimated 5,000 Bougainvilleans who succumbed to malaria during the blockade of the 1990s, and the poor state of health of most islanders today. In a squatter settlement next to my guesthouse, I find a man in his twenties with a cancer the size of a football growing from his heel.

BCL BURNT OUR VILLAGES. THEY TORTURED OUR PEOPLE. THEY CUT OFF PEOPLE'S HANDS AND THREW THEM FROM HELICOPTERS. THEY RAPED OUR WOMEN, THE YOUNG CHILDREN, THE MEN AND OLD LADIES!

More than half of all adults here are obese, while alcoholism is endemic.

"The war took everything out of everybody here and the trauma has been passed onto this generation," says Geoff McAndrews, a Californian who recently opened Bougainville's first surf camp. "There are no jobs. The only thing they have for entertainment is volleyball and homebrew."

Over the next few days, I learn a significant minority are pro-BCL. "If BCL comes back, they can fix the environmental issues because they know all about them," says accountant Lindsay Kalio. "I don't think any other company can do this as we have no relationship with them."

Yet more than half of all islanders I speak to oppose any kind of industrial mining.

"Our previous experience with mining was pollution and violence so I don't want mining to come back," says Alex Takena, a fisherman in Kieta. "We should focus on sustainable industries like copra (coconut) and cocoa farming."

Lawrence Robert, a carpenter in Arawa, agrees. "I don't think Panguna should reopen because our island is tiny and if miners come back, they'll tear it to pieces. We should have tourism instead to promote our culture and heritage."

Adds John Boscoe, a subsistence farmer from Oemah village in the island's south: "Mining did not benefit any of us in in the past but we all lost our homes. If it happens again, the Panguna landowners will drink milk and honey and we will get nothing."

The SMLOLA discounts anti-mining sentiment. "These people have to look at the bigger picture," Miriori says. "Mining is the right choice for Bougainville because we need the revenue if we want to become an independent nation and generate employment and security. Panguna will reopen, whether they like it or not."

BETTER THE DEVIL YOU OWN

A week passes until I regain enough strength to make the bone-jarring four-hour drive from Arawa to the capital Buka, which is as fly-blown as a place can possibly be.

When I arrive the city has been under a total electricity blackout for close to a week for reasons no one can explain. When I visit Bougainville's House of Representatives in the middle of the day to make an appointment with President John Monis, no one is there. Ditto at the Ministry for Mineral and Energy Resources and BCL's little office.

Later in the day, news breaks that the SMLOLA leadership dispute has ended and Miriori has emerged victorious. It sees RTG's share price soar 83 per cent in a single day and the inking of a "historic" deal between the consortium and the SMLOLA.

"The Chairman and Mr Daveona have also pledged support for RTG as the preferred development partner," RTG says in a statement. "This is a historic and important step for the landowners, with RTG being the first mining company that has been endorsed by the SMLOLA in 30 years."

But the victory is short-lived. Bougainville Minister for Minerals and Energy Raymond Masono accuses RTG of trying to sneak into Panguna through the back door. "The Autonomous Bougainville Government rejects companies that think they can bribe their way into people's resources by giving certain individuals money to gain landowner consent," he says.

RTG rigorously denies it has bribed landowners even though Miriori admitted to me that he is on their payroll. However BCL has been busy handing out money to landowners, too.

In March of last year, BCL distributed US$1.5 million in compensation to landowners at a public ceremony in Buka attended by Masono. "It is not the devil that we used to know, but it's now the devil that we own," Masono said at the ceremony, adding that it would be foolish go out looking for other developers.

Masono's comment about "the devil that we own" refers to Rio Tinto's June 2016 decision to finally call it quits on Bougainville – and its subsequent donation of its majority shareholdings in BCL to the governments of Bougainville and PNG.

RTG chairman Michael Carrick says the move was in part an attempt by Rio Tinto to stack the deck in BCL's favour. But the cards had already been stacked in a very big way by the authors of the 2015 Bougainville Mining Act, who gave BCL the first right of refusal to redevelop Panguna.

RTG's Carrick insists the Act no longer applies. "BCL 'claims' it has first right to the exploration license under the mining act," he says. "But our legal advice is that the renewal application for extension of the term of their licence is invalid because it was submitted out of time and was incomplete."

For his part Masono remains nonplussed, insisting BCL is still in the box seat and RTG doesn't even have a seat on the table. "Right now, the only legal applicant on the exploration tenement is BCL," he says. "Until that process is completed, there are no other applicants or applications over the same tenement. That's the position of the government."

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

On my last day in Bougainville, I score an interview with President John Momis at Buka's tin-pot airport. Right from the get-go he contradicts Masono's position and corresponding claims by BCL that its proposal has the support of the Autonomous Government of Bougainville.

"Currently we do not have a preferred partner. We will ask people who are interested to submit their applications and we will scrutinise their applications quite stringently," the President says. "We are open to discussions with BCL but there's whole new dimension today. They need to win the support of landowners who own the resources."

WHEN I ASK WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF BCL RETURNS TO BOUGAINVILLE, HE ANSWERS WITHOUT PAUSE. "WAR," HE SAYS, GRINDING HIS TEETH. "WAR."

I ask him what he thinks about RTG's competing bid to redevelop Panguna, and of rumours that China is eyeing the mine.

"We are not sure about RTG," he says. "They have to convince us first. I don't know if they are in a strong position. As for the Chinese, they are not in the picture right now. But we are open for business."

And so the race for Panguna's riches continues with no clear frontrunner. But no matter which company wins, three things seem certain.

First, the bulk of Panguna's riches will inevitably end up in the pockets of oligarchs, shareholders and hopelessly corrupt officials instead of a sovereign wealth fund where it belongs. This prediction is drawn from the 'resource curse', which dictates countries with lots of minerals tend to have less economic growth and democracy than countries with fewer natural resources. Hundreds of studies have been undertaken to prove the theory, though one need look no further to Hela Province on PNG's mainland to see it happening in real time. There, ExxonMobil's A$24 billion Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project has failed to deliver any significant development outcomes for landowners. "In fact, it has, in important ways, made life worse for the majority of people living in the project area," says Michael Main, an Australian National University doctoral student conducting fieldwork in the area.

Which leads to prediction number two: if Panguna reopens,

there will be blood. According to the World Bank study 'Natural Resources and Violent Conflict', countries that export around five per cent of GDP have a six per cent risk of conflict. But when exports reach 25 per cent of GDP, the probability of conflict climbs to 33 per cent. If Panguna reopens, exports of minerals will account for close to 100 per cent of Bougainville's GDP. That doesn't bode well under the World Bank's formula. And despite reassuring me the plans to reboot Panguna's will definitely go ahead, a fortnight after I leave Bougainville he changes his mind, announcing an indefinite moratorium.

"We will not allow this project once again to reignite the wounds of the Bougainville crisis and distract our focus for restoring peace and our preparation for our referendum in 2019," he told New Zealand's *Asia Pacific Report*.

The decision is a breath of fresh air and a rare example of a politician in PNG making an unpopular and unprofitable decision that is beyond a shadow of a doubt in the best interest of constituents.

My final prediction for Bougainville? That the people will overwhelmingly vote in favour of self-determination when they go to the polls in 2019. "We in Bougainville have a huge passionate ambition," Monis told me before I left, mirroring the thoughts of every Bougainvillean I interviewed on the subject. "And that ambition is to liberate ourselves from all kinds of transgressors, evil and marginalisation so there will be unity to affect the kind of changes we need to truly become free."

COLUMN

SLUT-SHAMING IN THE #METOO MOVEMENT

THERE IS A SMUG FLIPSIDE TO THE SOLIDARITY BETWEEN WOMEN IN THE #METOO MOVEMENT. BY HELEN DALE

WHEN I was 14 years and nine months, employment at this age being legal in Bjelke-Petersen's Queensland, my first boss was wealthy and influential enough to receive annual copies of Pirelli's famed calendar. His offices were decorated with other titillating *objets d'art*: framed prints of Roman frescoes from Pompeii, a selection of Ingres nudes, what I suspected was an original Athenian vase with two aroused men kissing.

I found this intoxicating, because I thought his office decorations both beautiful and sensual, particularly the Pirelli calendar and the Roman prints. "You like the women, don't you?" he asked me once, and I admitted I did.

Which is why when, years later, I paid him a visit and found Pirelli calendar, Roman prints and Athenian vase alike missing (Ingres, it seems, still passed muster) I remarked on it, only to be told it was now illegal for him to have such things in a workplace.

This saddened me, and made me wonder what, say, keepers of Roman antiquities in the British Museum are supposed to do in their workplace. I'm sure there are legislative carve-outs – there always are with these things – but in an attempt to make the world of work more welcoming to women I thought something valuable had been lost.

I have a similar sense about the recent #MeToo movement, much of which seems to be so very high school: all the pretty girls from good families are congratulating each other for 'bravely speaking out' about the advances they refused, while the women who made a calculation and opted to get their knees dirty are wisely keeping quiet.

There's a smugly slut-shaming flipside to the solidarity: wearing black to the Golden Globes, telling stories about who touched whose knee, applauding Oprah's speech. At least she wasn't promoting woo like *The Secret* or contributing to the anti-vax nonsense responsible for America's latest measles outbreak, so I suppose that's something.

I mean, if I named my first boss and then told how our frank conversation about what I liked to look at (revealing my sexual orientation) made me feel 'demeaned' or 'afraid', he would be displayed on the new pillory that is social media and utterly humiliated – or worse.

And yet: buried under the sanctimony is something important. I think 'Would you like to have sex with me?' is acceptable (if rather maladroit; seriously lads, read Ovid) in many situations. It's 'Have sex with me or else' that's the problem. In this instance, the case of Harvey Weinstein is instructive, because it provides an object lesson on the limits of male sexual power.

Biologists tell us that wealth is a proxy for evolutionary fitness. Weinstein shows the line where wealth's mere proxy-status becomes clear and evolutionary fitness still requires good teeth, hair and muscles. Money will buy only so much of those biological things. This is why Julius Caesar, among the most notorious (and successful) of Roman philanderers, was so sensitive about his bald spot.

IF #METOO WERE ONLY ABOUT PUTTING THE WEINSTEINS OF THE WORLD BACK IN THEIR BOX (AND, PREFERABLY, IN GAOL), IT WOULD BE A MORAL TRIUMPH FOR OUR TIME.

That Weinstein looks like a genetically modified cane toad matters, despite attempts to say it isn't so. People, and women especially, do not want to fuck something foul. Hence Weinstein's simultaneously repellent and pathetic reliance on NDAs. Men are known to be less choosy on this point, but they too have limits. It is ridiculous to pretend otherwise.

If #MeToo were only about putting the Weinsteins of the world back in their box (and, preferably, in gaol), it would be a moral triumph for our time. Instead, much of it represents a failure to understand how one woman's flattering pass is another woman's sexual assault – and its concomitant assertion all women should view insistent male sexual pursuit as the latter, not the former.

The biologists argue this is an example of female intra-sexual

competition. Women who accede to male entreaties – those who get their knees dirty – can be written off as sluts (something women do to other women far more frequently than men do to women), which burnishes the refusers' reputations. Evolutionary psychologists suggest this is a reason why more women are religious than men, at least in monotheistic societies. Conservative religiosity makes it much easier to slut-shame all those promiscuous pagans.

Viewed in that light, the now-common alliance between feminists and religious conservatives – including, bewilderingly, Islamic conservatives – becomes explicable, if still unreasonable.

People are notoriously bad at reading sexual signals and understanding what drives sexual desire. Their (our) misreadings form the basis of countless songs, poems, plays, and novels. #MeToo does not mean we all now enjoy perfect powers of perception: writers will still have their work cut out.

Forgotten, too, is the reality of female agency. Women also have sexual tastes, which is why many French women have defended a woman's 'right to seduce', even in the workplace. The likes of Catherine Deneuve are appalled by #MeToo's transformation of women into victims and the attempt to make love, which is ecstatic and personal, into something sober and social. Some women like getting their knees dirty. This does not make them victims – or sluts.

PEOPLE ARE NOTORIOUSLY BAD AT READING SEXUAL SIGNALS AND UNDERSTANDING WHAT DRIVES SEXUAL DESIRE.

This failure to grasp the diversity (and perversity) of human lust has been brought home to me, paradoxically, by the contents of my author's postbag (yes, readers routinely write to novelists).

Kingdom of the Wicked, my latest book, has as one of its main characters a senior officer in the Roman Army, Cornelius. He's a military lawyer, clever and thoughtful, tall and ginger (the Romans, unlike us, thought gingers especially sexy). He has many fine traits – honesty, bravery, loyalty, good in the sack – but he also plans and directs his legion's torture sessions. He is skilled at extracting information from people, brutally if necessary.

And since October 2017, when the book was published, I have received hundreds of letters from straight women – telling me they want to fuck Cornelius.

Helen Dale won the Miles Franklin Award for her first novel, The Hand that Signed the Paper*. Book I of her second novel,* Kingdom of the Wicked*, is now available. An exclusive extract from Book II appears on page 137 in this issue of* Penthouse.

top3

Australia's design store

DANISH HAND CRAFTED JERRY CANS FUEL

Exclusive to top3 by design
Authentic upcycled world war II Jerry Cans.

Sydney + Melbourne Stores
or shop online **top3.com.au**

Q&A

HOLIDAY

HOLIDAY IS THE STORY OF A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN WHO GETS SUCKED INTO THE WORLD OF A POWERFUL DRUG LORD. THE FILM FEATURED AT THIS YEAR'S SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, WHERE WE CAUGHT UP WITH THE FILM'S DIRECTOR AND LEAD STAR.
INTERVIEW BY SETH FERRANTI

ISABELLA Eklöf's new film *Holiday* stars Danish actress Victoria Carmen Sonne as the young and beautiful Sascha and is the Swedish filmmaker's take on the gangster genre. A mish-mash of eclectic imagery (the film was shot on the Turkish Riviera), gratuitous violence, sex (with a shocking pornographic scene) and multiple languages (lots of subtitles, but the film is mostly in English) *Holiday* is a slow burn, but gradually builds to a vicious and deafening crescendo – equal parts *Scarface* and Wes Anderson. During the first half of the film, the stylised pacing fooled me into thinking I understood what was to come. The second half came along and squarely punched me in the jaw, leaving me in total disbelief.

Playing to a packed house at the annual event in Park City, Utah, *Holiday* left viewers stunned. No one was sure what they'd seen or even how to digest it. It's a moral indictment against the world, but a vivid and gritty portrayal of what it's like for young, beautiful women who get sucked into the drug trade. After watching the film, I sat down with the director and her lead star to find out what it was like working on set, how the project came together and what takeaways they want for the viewers. »

The film seems like a *Scarface*/Wes Anderson mash-up. You have the glitz, dark themes and violence of *Scarface*, but everything is centred and framed like an Anderson movie. Was that your intention?

Isabella Eklöf: My intention was not to make a mash-up, but I'm certainly interested in the way *Scarface* portrays family. But of course, I was interested in the female perspective. I really like *Scarface*, everybody likes *Scarface*, and yes, it was in the back of my mind the whole time.

The centred thing: it's not just Wes Anderson. It's a whole range of directors that use that stuff, including Todd Solondz who did *Palindromes*. It's not a direct Wes Anderson reference, but it's a reference to a kind of storytelling that he and many others work with. I'm a part of that sort of movement, so to speak, where you want to go away from the psychology of the close-up and the shot/camera/shot and you go back and forth between people talking. I find it empty. I want the long shot, and I want it to feel like I position people, because that's what you do in a movie. That's the idea to be honest. This is what you want to look at right now – look, this is my stage and here's what's going to happen.

What did you think when you first read the script and found out what the role entailed?

Victoria Carmen Sonne: I received it when I was on the metro. I think it was summer, It was kind of warm – around late afternoon. I was like okay I'm going to go home, I'm going to print it and then sit and read so I can take notes. I walked by a café, and I decided to have a quick iced coffee. I sat down and I couldn't help it. I opened the script on my small iPhone 5. I just sat there and read the whole scripting. I wasn't actually thinking much while reading, I was just experiencing it from the beginning to the end. Then afterwards I was stunned; I felt a really strong connection to the script and the character – instantly.

What does it mean to tell this story from a female perspective with all the graphic violence and sex?

Isabella: Men have a fascination with action; car chases and stuff, which really bores me. I wanted to get inside that to understand the theology – if you will – the psychology of it. What happens to people who are in this situation? Not just the outlaw, but all the people around him. That's more interesting, partly because the story hasn't been told much. I thought there must be so much more here; choosing to live that life is in itself such a big deal. So, all the action – it's just, yeah, okay, that's fun – but then what? I found that interesting.

She's a girl trapped in this power dynamic, and we were looking for a way to transmit that that's both dramatic but also intensely present – so you don't lose the moment in the dramatic structure. It took a lot of time to get that balance right.

How much of Sascha is you and how much is the character?

Victoria: For me it's always about trying to let go from the inside out. I'm discovering the world through Sascha's eyes. When you're working from that place as an actress, the impulses that you get are not quite yours, you're experiencing Sascha's point of view through her eyes.

For example, if somebody came up to me and hit me in the face – me as Victoria – I would react one certain way. Maybe I would hit back. I would push. Maybe I would just yell. I would say 'What the fuck', or something like that. But if it was Sascha, she would react differently. You can start working with these impulses from the character's point of view, from her experience of the world. It's an interesting combination that you as the actor are experiencing as Sascha.

What was it like working with Victoria, especially given the situations you put her in as an actor?

Isabella: It was great working with Victoria, from start to finish, because she's intelligent and has an intuitive understanding of the character. She knows what Sascha is going through and she sympathises with her. She understands why I would make this movie. It's been easy. Super easy. We didn't even have to talk much.

Do you think this story is representative of the way a lot of young, beautiful women are co-opted or drafted into the drug world?

Victoria: I think it's representative of not just the way young, beautiful women get roped into it, but how a lot of women of all ages are dragged into power dynamics that aren't fair for them. I feel like what Sascha had was a meltdown, but it originated from a place inside herself where she felt very much rejected. She has kept open the possibility of maybe being with Thomas and experiencing a more liberated, more flowing love. But she had to kill that place in herself. She's shutting something down deep inside herself to be able to go through with being part of Michael's life and family.

It's a combination of huge rejection one more time in her life; once again feeling rejected and not good enough. I think in the end she felt safer around Michael, which is absurd because you would say that she's not. I think the kind of dynamics of this relationship are solely defined by Michael. For her that's a relief, because then she doesn't have to put words to her thoughts and emotions; she can just act or react in certain very strict, outlined areas.

Isabella: Young, beautiful women are especially vulnerable because they're seen as a prize. People put more energy into getting power over them. She's more of a commodity. But I think women of all ages and appearances experience the same pressure to jump into a dynamic that they didn't set up, that they didn't want. They're just supposed to enter into it and fulfil the role that was made for them. But *Holiday* isn't really about criminals – it's about all of us. It's about how we let ourselves be seduced by materials and the sliding scale of sinking deeper and deeper into moral compromise.

YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL WOMEN ARE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE BECAUSE THEY'RE SEEN AS A PRIZE. PEOPLE PUT MORE ENERGY INTO GETTING POWER OVER THEM.

OPINION

AVOIDING THE PERILS OF CUFFING SEASON

JUST BECAUSE EVERYONE ELSE WANTS A WINTER SNUGGLE-BUDDY DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD. BY DAISY COUSENS

IT'S summer. You're a young(ish), virile, stallion of a man, oozing confidence and charisma. The days are hot, the nights are long and the weekends full of sun, sand and seemingly endless barbecues. But most importantly, the girls are – in a word – loose. For some reason, the word 'relationship' has slipped from the vocabulary of every eligible maiden, replaced by 'Tinder', 'One-night stand', and 'Don't call me'. For the fast-paced, bros-before-hoes kind of man, it's the perfect season to indulge your thirst for fun and love of debauchery.

Then autumn hits. Holiday frivolity is replaced by early bedtimes, dark mornings and the grind of the nine-to-five. But most unfortunately; the girls are, well, different. A quick one-nighter borne of a mutual understanding is replaced by a slew of post-coitus text messages, demanding to know why you haven't called. Drunken nights morph into awkward afternoon coffee dates. And everywhere you look, even the most stoic fuckboys are pairing up. Your social life is in ruins, and you have no idea what went so horribly wrong.

So why this inexplicable shift in the cosmos? Everyone seemed to be having plenty of singleton fun just a month before. Well, you're not going crazy. The sudden scent of sickly romance is what the cool kids call 'cuffing season'. That is: the time between the start of autumn and the middle of winter when humans become desperate to find a snuggle-buddy for the colder months. The term is a loose BDSM reference to handcuffs; people want to be 'cuffed' to someone who will keep them warm in winter.

Cuffing season isn't some weird fad. It's an actual thing, and when put in context makes perfect sense. In America, for example, cuffing season begins around September and ends in early March. Given the below-zero temperatures, social activities can be almost completely eliminated. Who the hell wants to spend a night at the bar when you'd have to drive through a blizzard to get there? It's not hard to understand why Americans want something to do when they're trapped at home by an ungodly polar vortex. Especially if that something happens to be someone. Cuffing season also coincides with many of their major holidays; Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. You know, the occasions where Great Auntie Mabel infallibly asks her most promising heirs, "So, darling, why don't you have a girlfriend? Do you not like girls anymore?"

Australians, however, are a little bit different. As our major holidays coincide with summer, our modus operandi varies. We'd rather be unattached for the holidays, finding fulfillment through pure party spirit. Our preference for pairing up is associated with the nothing-months in the middle of the year, when we want to occupy our time with 'Netflix and chill'.

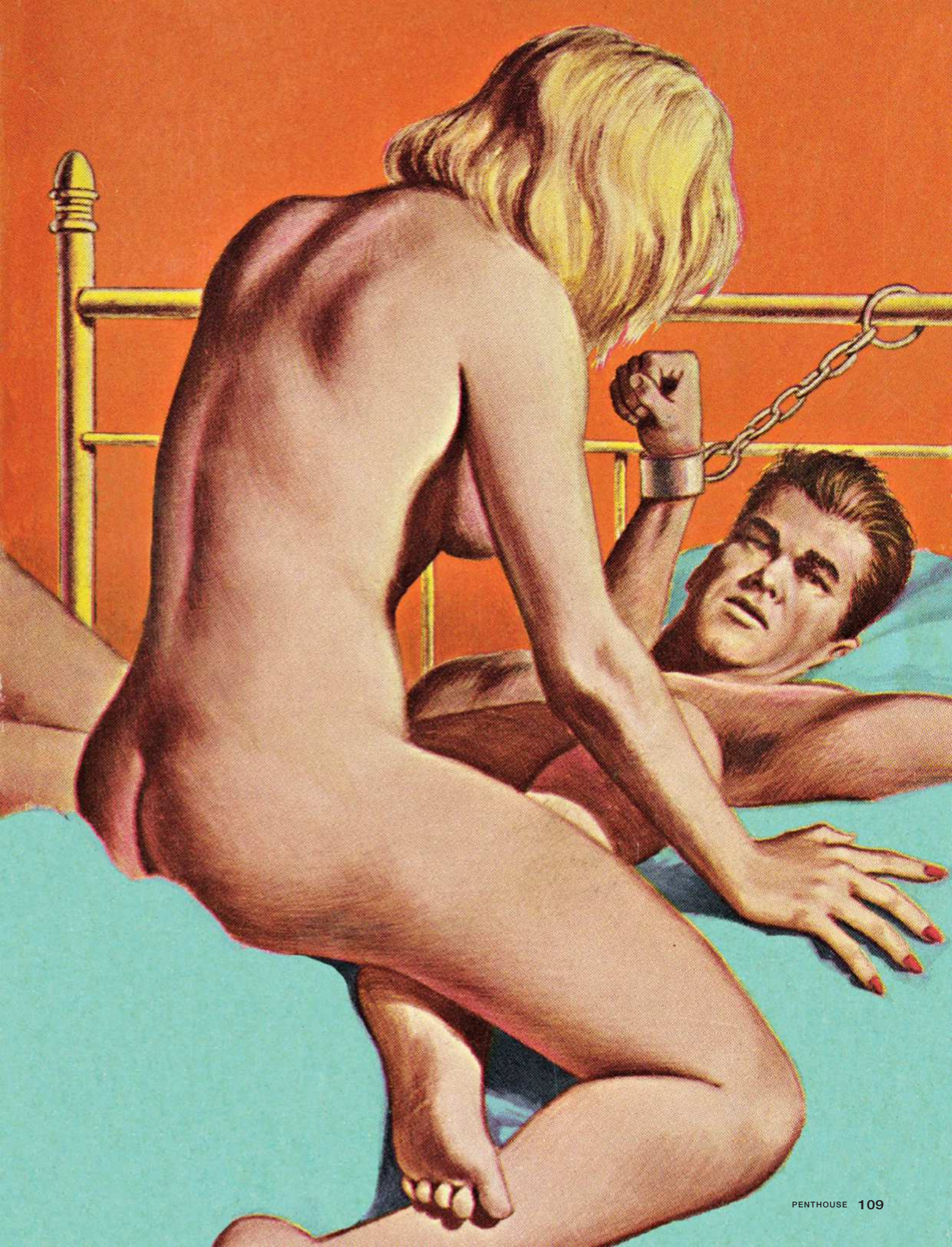
Also, the numbers don't lie. According to a 2015 poll from the dating app Hinge, men were 15 per cent more likely to be sniffing around for a relationship in winter than in any other season. However, during summer, men were 11 per cent less likely to couple up. Women, however, are pretty much equally clingy all year 'round. In winter, they were five per cent more likely to want a relationship, and five per cent less likely in the warmer months.

THE TERM IS A LOOSE BDSM REFERENCE TO HANDCUFFS; PEOPLE WANT TO BE 'CUFFED' TO SOMEONE WHO WILL KEEP THEM WARM IN WINTER.

Now, all of this is fine if you're the kind of guy who's looking for a relationship. However, if you're more of a no-strings-attached type of guy – the kind who likes his conquests with a side of see ya later – this is a disaster. Yes, five per cent doesn't seem like much. However, it could easily be the difference between a wild night with a clean, mutually happy break in the morning, or emotional texts, progressively angry voicemails, and obscure, tear-emoji-ridden Facebook posts denouncing all men.

As a woman in relationship, I can confirm that regardless of what single ladies say during their morning affirmations, it is impossible for women to have meaningless sex. We release more oxytocin (aka the 'cuddle hormone') during intercourse

CREDIT: JMCDERMOTTILLO



than men, which makes us biologically prone to getting nonsensically attached. Ever felt vaguely guilty for assuming women are clingy? Don't, because we are. No matter what the cranky, neo-Marxist feminasties preach, women by and large prefer emotional, loving sex to a don't-kiss-me-goodbye romp in the hay. During cuffing season, we are especially prone. However, there are rare exceptions.

If you're a guy who's seemingly immune to the cold weather urges, it is possible to avoid the perils of cuffing season. You just have to find those exceptions to the rule. I would suggest a woman over 45, divorced at least once. She's good fun, takes care of herself and after years of experience, knows her way around a bedroom. Not only will she be happy with a hump and dump, she'll probably be the one kicking you out of bed as soon as it's over.

IF YOU'RE A GUY WHO'S SEEMINGLY IMMUNE TO THE COLD WEATHER URGES, IT IS POSSIBLE TO AVOID THE PERILS OF CUFFING SEASON. YOU JUST HAVE TO FIND THOSE EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE.

Your second option is a puma; a woman between 26 and 34 who has a thing for younger men. You know, like a cougar but younger. She finds the social taboo of being schlonged by a younger man a thrilling one to bust, and would rather put a notch on her bedpost than a shiny rock on her left ring finger. The downside to pumas is they're not interested if you're over 25. So, college age Casanovas; get in while you're young.

But let's be honest. Eventually, gentlemen, it is most likely you will want to find a nice woman, settle down, and pop out a couple of kids. I know many an erstwhile man-whore who can attest to that. When such desire hits, you can put cuffing season to good use. By frequenting small places of gathering during autumn, you can use women's heightened sense of snuggly-ness to more easily catch a mate.

But while you're happy flying solo, beware of cuffing season. Stick to the divorcees, the pumas, or even the recently-broken-up-and-on-the-rebound. Otherwise, you might just find yourself unwittingly cuffed until spring rears its beautiful, sexy, very much welcomed head.

TRIPLE DISTILLED
VODKA

WILD ROSE
GIN

BARREL AGED
VODKA

"Pour it again, Sam"

Spirits inspired by the charm and romance of Casablanca.

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID

hereslookingatyoukid.com.au

SID (WAS) VICIOUS

A PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING CLASH MORE BRUTAL THAN ANYTHING THE WRITERS COULD EVER SCRIPT.
BY TOBIAS HANDKE

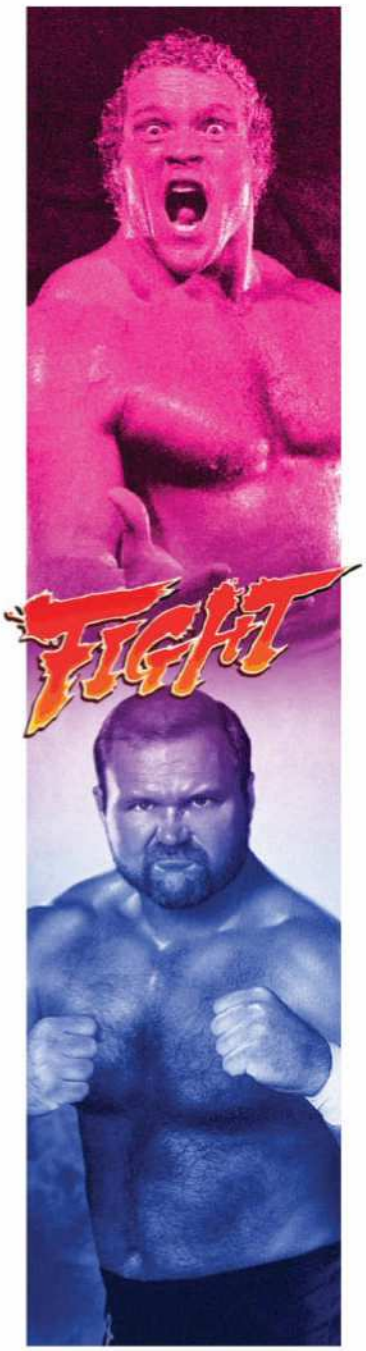
PROFESSIONAL wrestling cops a lot of stick for being a staged 'sport' but there was nothing fake about the infamous hotel brawl that took place between Sid Vicious and Arn Anderson during World Championship Wrestling's (WCW) 1993 European tour.

Having spent almost 24 hours travelling – including a flight from the US to the UK, a bus ride to Wales for a show then a bus to their hotel in Lancashire – the wrestlers and crew were tired, frustrated and on edge. Heading to the bar the wrestlers began drinking heavily as they waited for their food and started airing out their grievances.

Veteran hard man Arn Anderson led the chorus of wrestlers unhappy with WCW's lack of drawing power, pondering why they were struggling to beat their archrivals in the ratings. A number of other wrestlers chipped in with their two cents before bleached blonde rising star Sid Vicious had his say. Bragging about his recent pay rise (knowing full well Anderson had taken a pay cut), Vicious also let it be known he thought it was time for legendary wrestlers like Ric Flair and Anderson to step aside and let the younger talent have their shot at leading the company.

There's no denying Vicious was right, as WCW had a habit of letting the old guys run the show, but his cockiness didn't go down well with Anderson, one of Flair's closest friends. The two got into a heated argument, traded insults and lobbed beers at each other before being separated by Too Cold Scorpio and head of security Doug Dillinger. Both men were escorted to their rooms, with Anderson hurling more profanities at Vicious, who claimed Anderson smashed a beer bottle and threatened to kill him, although the former Four Horsemen member has disputed this over the years.

As Vicious stewed in his room he became more and more livid and decided Anderson needed to be taught a lesson. So like any normal six foot nine, 144-kilogram mountain of muscle would do, Vicious broke off a chair leg and went to Anderson's room. This is where the story differs depending on whom you believe, as there were no witnesses to detail what unfolded. Anderson claimed he heard a knock at the door and when he opened it, was hit by the chair leg and knocked unconscious. Vicious says they exchanged words but he never used the chair leg, and after calming down, headed back to his room. This is when things really took off.



Anderson came charging out of his room and made a beeline for the former WCW Heavyweight Champion with a pair of scissors, stabbing Vicious multiple times, including a nasty gut wound.

In the ensuing scuffle, the gargantuan pair broke a window and Vicious managed to get hold of the weapon. Bleeding, enraged and heavily intoxicated, Vicious lived up to his name and stabbed Anderson over 20 times. Most of the wounds were to Anderson's shoulders and back but one stab wound was an inch below his eye while another was a five-inch slit on his throat. Neither can remember much more about the fight, although Vicious does recall Anderson yelling, "You're fucking killing me!" as he repeatedly stabbed him. Scorpio heard the commotion and when confronted with the bloody scene managed to intervene, saving Anderson's life.

Both men were taken to the Blackburn Royal Infirmary hospital and patched up, with hospital staff informing Anderson that if he'd lost any more blood he would have died. Neither man pressed charges and both were sent home the following day. It wasn't long after the incident Vicious was fired by WCW president Eric Bischoff after several wrestlers threatened to walk out if he didn't get the boot, while Anderson got off with a light suspension. Vicious has since apologised and the two are said to be on good terms, although they keep their distance when together around sharp objects.

SMOOTH, ELEGANT, AUSTRALIAN;
STRAIT, FROM TASMANIA

INTERNATIONAL AWARD-WINNING SPIRITS SINCE 2006

BOTTLED AT SOURCE IN 2018

KEEP IT SOLID. RUN THE STATE.
SOLID
STATE
COLOGNE
JOURNEYMAN
SOLIDSTATEFORMEN.COM
SOLID
STATE

DESIGNER STYLE

FOUR AUSSIE DESIGNERS MAKING WAVES ON THE WORLD STAGE
BILLY BONES | PAUL ANTHONY | THE PEOPLE VS. | WILD RHINO

DESIGNER

BILLY BONES

“WE started as a result of being fed up with the status-quo of Aussie street fashion. We weren’t competition surfers or sponsored skaters, we weren’t preppy rich boys and we didn’t wear ultra-baggy tees with spray on jeans,” says Sam from Billy Bones.

The bold headwear brand has been making waves among the fashion-conscious, wank-free Melbourne streetwear scene, as trends steer away from straight-up surf and towards a greater sense of style.

“We’re just normal people who appreciate cool shit.”

Fanging on a lid isn’t a new concept, but drawing inspiration from their customers, and not a conceited lookbook, is what puts Billy Bones ahead of the pack.

“It’s that individual cool that can’t really be placed into any one genre that really inspires us. So we try to design products that people will look at and instantly think: fuck yeah!”

> BLACK BETTY $79.95

A little bit suave, a little bit rock ‘n' roll. If you’re going to sport a fedora, then do it properly with a Black Betty.

> THE SKIPPER $69.95

Got a Gilligan that needs a smack? Give them the royal treatment and hit ’em with The Skipper.

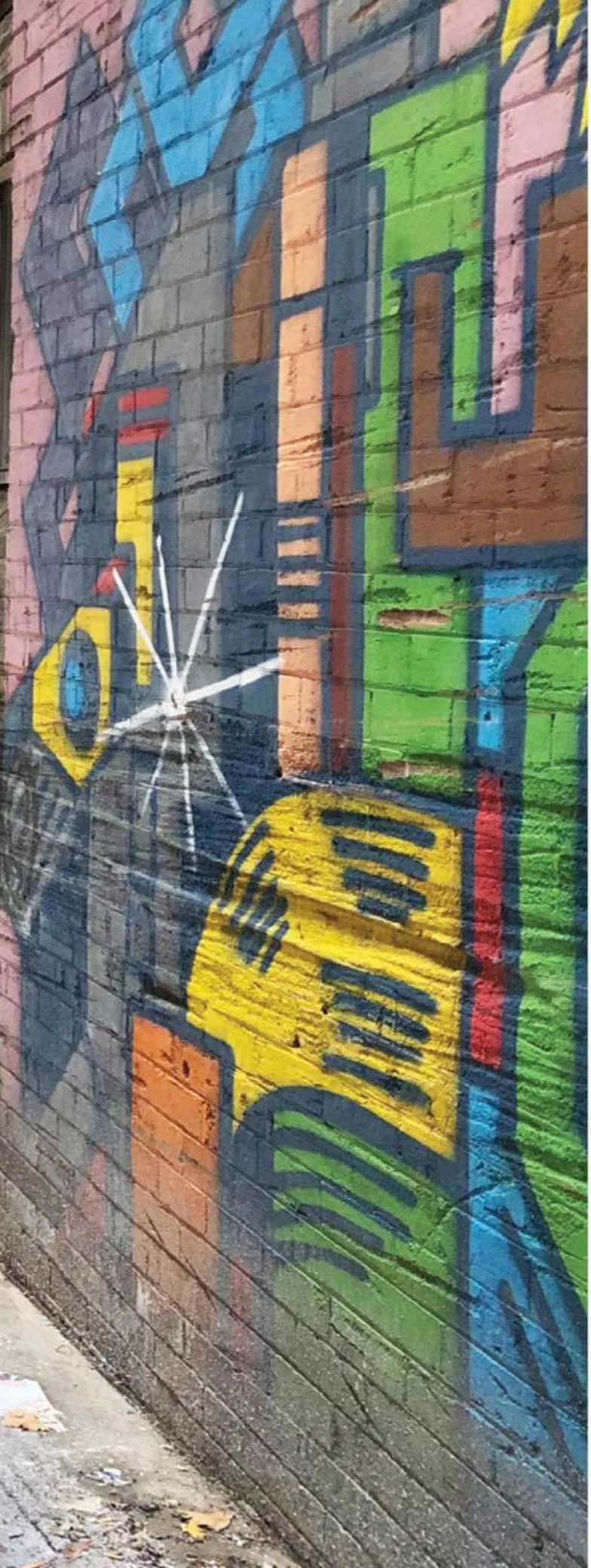
> THE SHELBY $49.95

Shine ya shoes guv’nor? A dab of cockney charm for any occasion.

> GROVE $34.95

Because beanies are a wardrobe staple and you can afford to take a style risk with something bold.

facebook.com/billybonesclub
instagram.com/billybonesclub
billybonesclub.com



DESIGNER

PAUL ANTHONY

"A true identity takes time, but I'd like to think it's a confident identity that shows strength and simplicity".

Paul Anthony's range of shirts was borne of an inability to get the right fit for himself. Necessity is the mother of invention, and not one to sit still, the Sydney-based hairdresser and designer set out to create the perfect shirt first for himself, before making it available to men everywhere.

"I got motivated as I struggled to get shirts that suited my body. I'm naturally lean with a long torso so I found shirts boxy and short. So I used my body as a template, although it does suit more than just my body type."

"A TRUE IDENTITY TAKES TIME, BUT I'D LIKE TO THINK IT'S A CONFIDENT IDENTITY THAT SHOWS STRENGTH AND SIMPLICITY"

His design also incorporates one very clever function that's so simple you'd think it had already been done. "I had issues with the chest gap, which always looks terrible in pictures, so I added an extra button in the chest area to support the shirt from opening."

Genius, huh?
His approach to the technical design process is just as no-nonsense as his idea in the first place: keep it real.

"Drawings and reality can be very different, so I work with the reality straight away." The look is suited to the everyman: dudes who just want a shirt to look good, whilst fitting comfortably.

instagram.com/paulanthonylabel
paulanthonylabel.com

DESIGNER

THE PEOPLE VS.

"The People Vs. is the story of the streets and the people who occupy them."

These Bali/Bondi-based designers are breaking into the international streetwear scene with comfortable, stylish looks that straddle the line between new and nostalgic.

Since 2013, the brand has evolved through countless hours spent trawling through flea markets, looking for silhouttes and experimenting with washing techniques to give the clothes a unique distressed appearance that adds loads of character to the cuts.

They make only a limited number of each garment, all of which receive individual laundering to create an authentic vintage look that mixes punk-rock aesthetics with contemporary streetwear design.

ABYSS MOTH TEE – BLACK ACID $59.95

Channel your inner 90s, Motörhead-loving, bourbon drinker. Sling on a pair of skinnies and some black Docs to complete the look.

STEVIE SHIRT – BENGAL $89.95

If you don't have a shirt that looks like it's ripped from a couch on a 70s porn set, are you even really trying?

MOTH HOODIE – KHAKI $89.95

Toned down, comfortable and goes with pretty much everything. This is your go-to hoodie as the temperature declines.

EDDIE SHERPA DENIM JACKET $189.95

Ripped, distressed and worn in all the right places. Straight out of the 'got-no-fucks-to-give' playbook.

facebook.com/ ThePeopleVs
instagram.com/thepeoplevs
thepeoplevs.com

WILD RH

DESIGNER

WILD RHINO

"We walk the earth to bring you the highest quality materials and the ultimate combination of fashion and function."

Wild Rhino is a leading Australian brand in casual and dress-casual footwear, with products and materials sourced from a range of locations around the world.

A shoe should be comfortable as well as stylish and well-made. Anyone who's ever been stuck with a great looking pair of leather boots, only to have them wear you more than you wear them, knows that you never forgo comfort for good looks.

Thankfully, Wild Rhino shoes apportion comfort, quality and class in equal measure, with a range of different styles to choose from. It's typically women who are associated with footwear obsession, but an arsenal of boots, dress shoes and casual options are also an essential part of any man's wardrobe.

Here're our picks from the Wild Rhino Signature collection to get you started (or keep you sorted).

MANLY TAN $179.95
With a unique crosshatch pattern on the toe of the shoe, this is a modern take on a classic piece of footwear.

DIGBY BLACK $189.95
A classic men's boot made from quality European leathers. This should be a staple in any man's wardrobe.

DIEGO TAN $189.95
The elastic side 'Chelsea' boot was created by Queen Victoria's personal shoemaker, and it's only gotten better with age.

MANCHESTER BLACK $179.95
Particularly useful to have in your wardrobe as it suits practically any occasion, be it casual or formal.

facebook.com/wildrhinoshoes
instagram.com/wildrhinoshoes
wildrhinoshoes.com.au

MAN-TAIN

RAWHIDE

NATHAN Baxter from Sydney-based cobbler Baxter & Black provides us his unique insight into purchasing and maintaining high-quality leather goods. He's travelled the world honing his craft; a journey that brought him from Australia to London's Savile Row and all the way to the home of shoemaking itself in Budapest. "Investing in quality leather goods," he says "is an investment in yourself." We tend to agree and asked him for some pointers on what to look for when buying quality leather goods.

EXAMINE THE LEATHER CAREFULLY

"Look at the grain of the leather and get an idea for how the item feels as if it is being used. Lesser quality items won't have a uniform feel to them. Or a section of leather could have a different grain in a place where it will result in unnecessary creases or early cracking."

CHECK THE THREAD AND STITCHING

"Stitching should be uniform and even. Ideally, the thread should look flat against the leather and no fuzz should be seen on the thread. A hand-stitched item is of a higher quality than machine stitching, and less prone to stitches coming apart."

EDGE FINISH

"Leather is a porous material, all edges should be folded over or sealed. Sealing an edge is done by burnishing it (sealed by rubbing wax into the raw edge) or with a rubberised edge paint.
If the edges are not sealed, then the leather is open to the effects of water and the toil of daily use."

AVOID GENUINE LEATHER STAMPED ITEMS

"This means the item is made of low-grade leather. Consider buying items marked 'Top Grain Leather', which is made from leather that has been split to get more use out of the hide. Look for items marked 'Full Grain Leather', this is where the whole leather is used for the item."

LOOK AFTER YOUR LEATHER

Leather is a natural product and will age uniquely over time. Nourishing and cleaning on a regular basis will ensure your leather will age well and give you years of service.

Nathan recommends:

> Sapihir Reno'mat or Renovateur for cleaning shoes
> A sole guard for the fore part of the shoe
> A flush-mounted steel plate for people who are heavy on their feet
> A cedar shoe tree to wick away moisture and maintain the shape of your shoe

Luxury Five Star Accommodation. Award Winning Food & Wine. Unrivalled Lakeside Views.

This is Sophistication.

This is The Rees Hotel Queenstown.

THE REES HOTEL
QUEENSTOWN, NEW ZEALAND
TRUE SOUTH™

The Rees Hotel Queenstown, 377 Frankton Road, Queenstown, New Zealand.
P: +64 3 450 1100 e: reservations@therees.co.nz www.therees.co.nz

LAZY DAZE

PHOTOGRAPHER
HENRYK LOBACZEWSKI

MODEL
MELANIE NIZETTE

MILLI contacted me on Instagram and asked to shoot as she was travelling from Denmark to Australia. I had access to a house on my street in Bellevue Hill, and Milli was very comfortable being nude, so it made for an easy and relaxing day. I find European models are much more comfortable with shooting nude – it seems to be a bit more taboo in Australia. - Henryk Lobaczewski

GEORGE & KING
CUSTOM MENSWEAR
www.georgeandking.com.au
Photographer: Julian Lallo

Hello!

You fool. I love you. Come on join the joyride...

Join the joyride! **20% off all Esto wine** site wide. Enter Coupon Code: estohouse

• Adelaide Hills cool climate wines • Estate grown fruit • Produced by Charlotte Dalton • No bull. One tortoise.

esto

estowines.com.au

BOOK EXTRACT

KINGDOM OF THE WICKED
BOOK II: ORDER

BY HELEN DALE | ILLUSTRATIONS BY TERRY RODGERS

AT 22 YEARS OLD, Helen Dale became the youngest ever recipient of the prestigious Miles Franklin Award for her first novel, **The Hand that Signed the Paper.** *The following extract is from part two of her second novel,* **Kingdom of the Wicked,** *an alternative history set in an industrialised Roman Empire and featuring the trial of Jesus Christ. It's replete with sex, violence and all things Roman. We were hooked on the first instalment, Rules, and if you like fighting, fornicating and history, we're sure you'll enjoy it too. You can purchase both books at wilkinsonpublishing.com.au*

THE Pit at night was a different proposition from The Pit during the day. At lunch, Cynara had noted the overdone columns and the granite and marble foyer. Romans were incapable of true architectural ugliness, but they had a taste for ornamentation that was challenging when one was drunk. She noticed the tiny yellow lights picking out every detail of sculpture and signage, dancers with gilded skin and oiled tresses on a raised dais in the gaming room, pageboys serving cocktails to customers identified by the Corinthians–different Corinthians this time–manning the front counter. One of the boys approached and presented them with glasses full of something bright blue streaked with yellow. She clinked with Agrippa and felt the concoction bite at the back of her throat. She could see people punting a large ball back and forth in the pool and shouting. It was at that point she noticed that whatever it was they were drinking glowed in the dark once it came into contact with human skin. Agrippa's lips were cerulean. She caught a glimpse of herself in the glass frontage of the gaming room as the pageboy led them down a wide spiral staircase. So were hers.

The boy took them to a glassed-in observation area set mid-way up a bank of tiered seats. Agrippa pulled her close to him, his fingers raking her side. She looked out over a compact, steepling well, its central point dominated by a fighting square. Above it, a shining metal cage was suspended on a system of chains and pulleys. She'd known what he was planning, but had no idea that there was a cage on this scale in Jerusalem.

At various points around the stands she saw more glassed boxes like theirs, their privileged inhabitants lit up like fireflies thanks to spectral drinks. One woman, she noticed, had a translucent blue-green glow under her chin and in the hollow at the base of her throat. The well–the pit–was smoky and dark, dipped in inky blacks and autumnal browns. The brilliant flashes of light–from flesh, iridescent drinks, glinting metal–stood out against the shadows, a beautiful but disturbing sight. Naked girls–their skin gilded like the dancers upstairs and decorated with what looked like green glittering fish scales–began to bring in finger food and set it down before them. They sashayed to the music–not too loud as yet, but already underpinned by elaborate percussion reverberating up through the floor. Agrippa grinned and fed her a fat black olive. Various acts–singers, mainly–warmed up the crowd as the tiers began to fill. Cynara wondered where all the people were coming from, but then started to recognise faces: her own employees from the Empire, the woman who often served her at the bank, a merchant she knew by sight hand in hand with a *gallus* from the Fleet Fox. People stomped their feet in time to the beat. A boy bearing dainties joined her and Agrippa in their box. He too was naked, his skin silver and decorated with blue scales. Cynara smiled at him and–insatiably curious–reached out and stroked his upper arm. Agrippa looked on, amused.

'Those are attached,' he said. 'The scientists have them manifest as they mature, and fade as they age.'

The boy submitted to her touch, sidling up to her and offering her his throat, which was delicately marked with the blue scales; they were like glistening sequins. Cynara noticed they felt cool and metallic under her fingers, but also smooth and fine. Agrippa reached around her and ran the back of his hand over the skin beneath the boy's ear.

'You're very lovely,' he said.

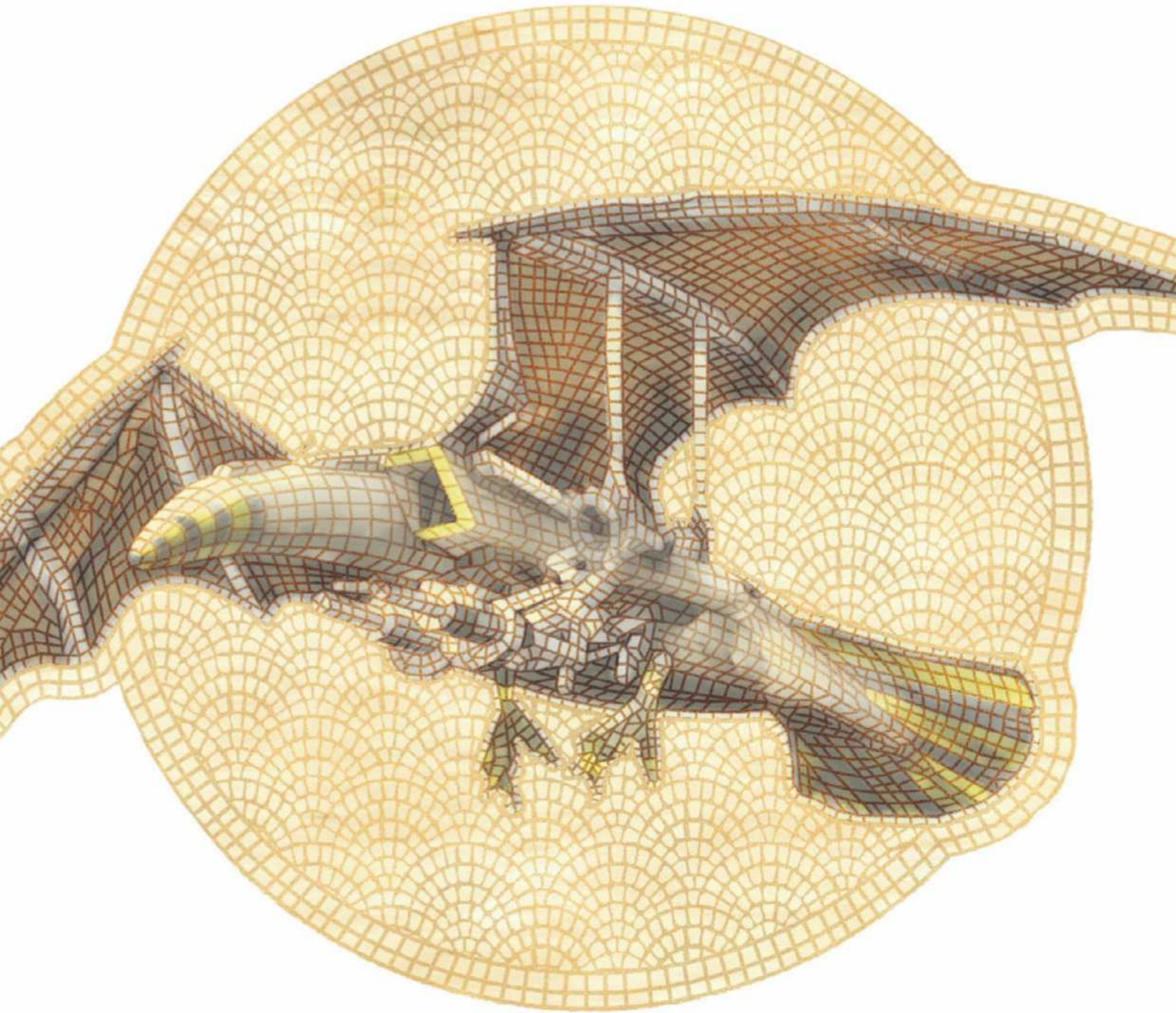
'You both like me, I see,' the boy said. 'I am available for your pleasure afterwards, should you wish it.'

Cynara withdrew her hand as though she'd touched a hot stovetop. Her friends in Rome had told her this, that the attendants in the glassed-in observation boxes of the rich were on offer. She'd believed them–nothing in the *Caput Mundi* surprised her–but to see it first hand still came as a shock.

'That won't be necessary,' Agrippa told him gently. 'There will still be a generous tip, of course.'

The boy smiled and took his leave, while the two girls appeared with more food; one cut sausage on the table behind their seats and prepared a bowl of fruit, placing it before them.

'Where do those beautiful children come from?' Cynara



wanted to know. They looked younger and darker than the attendants she'd seen in Rome.

'Oh, Persia,' he said airily. 'Slavery is still legal there.'

Once again, the baldness of it shocked her.

'I see.'

She looked at the three of them, noticing the girls' small round breasts and slim hips and the boy's shoulders. They were broadening, but still adolescent. She guessed that all three were younger than sixteen, but by how far was difficult to spot. Agrippa speared a piece of melon with his little fork and popped it into Cynara's mouth.

'Come, graze,' he said, his tongue touching her ear. 'I'd like to watch you eat, with those pretty blue lips.'

Cynara chuckled and ordered wine, leaning into him. He kissed her, smoothing back her hair and touching the back of her neck, just below the hairline. She felt a little thrill of pleasure course through her.

You are a very bad man, Severus Agrippa, but you are so much fun.

A man in a billowing grey robe and a black cape picked out with silver stars strode into the fighting square. He carried a heavy staff surmounted with an eagle in one hand and grasped his robes in the other. He stopped under the suspended cage and swept the cape out and around him so it shimmered and shone. He thumped his staff against the ground three times, cutting through the hubbub. He held his arms out and circled slowly.

'Listen all! Listen all! Listen all! Here's the final test, the truth of it, the great mark. Since the days of Homer's heroes, men have reserved the greatest feats and greatest fear for single combat. It's not every day that we bring out the challenger and the challenged, and certainly, in the fine and moral city of Jerusalem, it's not something we can do too often. And yet, just as Nestor contended with the giant Ereuthalion so, too, do the people of Judaea have a great story of challenge and single combat–'

Cynara knew what was coming and repressed a strong, instinctive desire to run down the aisle, leap onto the stage and force-feed the barker his staff.

If this involves a sling, I'm not going to be responsible for my actions.

'POOR JERUSALEM,' HE SAID INTO HER EAR, 'SO DETERMINED THAT NO ONE'S ALLOWED TO HAVE ANY FUN. NO FIGHTING, NO FUCKING, NO DANCING, NO FESTIVALS.

'–Here, they speak of David and Goliath, where the battle was won by the mighty Jewish champion, Goliath–'

At that moment Cynara collapsed into gales of laughter. She could see Agrippa was pleased she was laughing so hard, but that he had no idea why.

'The giant just flattened the shepherd boy.'

He still didn't get it.

'Think of it as historical revisionism.'

'Of course. David's the Jewish one.'

He joined her, now, and the three children assigned to wait on them watched as they both shuddered with mirth.

'I shouldn't be laughing,' she said. Agrippa dabbed at his cheek with a silk handkerchief, shaking his head at her. His screen make-up had run.

'I should have cleaned this off,' he said.

The barker thumped the floor with his staff again, announcing the fighters. Cynara saw that the mistake went all the way down: 'David' was a big man, heavily muscled and brawny, 'Goliath' was notably leaner, but with a muscular efficiency about him. She doubted he was any younger than his opponent. Both were empty handed, a concession to local sensibilities: there would be no fights to the death in the Holy City. They were oiled and naked, glistening under the banks of lights. They would fight, she knew, using the techniques of the *pankration*, which while unarmed was still conducted with extraordinary violence. Only biting was forbidden.

'I present to you, then, two men with a gutful of ferocity and fear,' the barker was saying now, 'two men, to the death!'

Cynara sat up, shocked as the crowd roared its approval. The cage began to descend slowly around the two fighters as the barker retreated into the gloom, beating his staff against the ground. It was then that she saw that weapons–a metal pole with a vicious curved blade on the end, a pair of wooden truncheons, what looked like an oversized fork–were suspended from various bits of the cage. All were pinned high up, in difficult to reach spots. It was ingenious and nasty.

'That's illegal here,' she said. Agrippa touched the sensitive spot on her neck again; she felt her back begin to arch in response.

'Poor Jerusalem,' he said into her ear, 'so determined that no one's allowed to have any fun. No fighting, no fucking, no dancing, no festivals. I sometimes think the powers that be in this town would be happier if we reproduced by parthenogenesis.'

Cynara didn't want to watch someone die. She'd been to the cages in Rome and was disturbed to find the killing didn't repel her as she thought it might. For the first couple of times, she'd gone with friends and felt like the fifth wheel as they giggled and bonded and enjoyed each other's company. When she went again, it had been with Leon, her lover. To her dismay, not only had she found the experience enjoyable, she'd had passionate, animal sex with him afterwards. Watching now with Agrippa, she felt the same process starting again.

One of the fish-scale children closed the door to their box, cutting the noise considerably. She approached Agrippa.

'Don Agrippa, there is a call for you from your wife. Will you take it at your table?'

Cynara watched as he frowned and scratched his ear. She felt

THE LONDON Nº1®

Nº1 ORIGINAL BLUE GIN

COMBINED WINES & FOODS

02 9533 7955 | INFO@COMBINEDWINES.COM.AU | WWW.COMBINEDWINES.COM.AU

GOLIATH DELIVERED A VICIOUS LOW KICK TO DAVID'S THIGH, HOLDING THE TRUNCHEON IN FRONT OF HIS FACE, HIS CHEST RISING AND FALLING AS HE GASPED FOR AIR.

a momentary pang of guilt, blushed and then sighed.

A Roman high school, a Roman academy, a Roman employer and mostly Roman friends. And I'm still a Jewish square.

'Put her through, yes.'

He was still frowning as the bell chimed and he leaned forward to take the call. Cynara focused on the silver finish on the handset. It was shaped like a trumpet; he rolled it in his fingers beside his ear as he spoke.

'Hello, dear.'

He shifted in his seat and kissed his teeth.

'Was it rape?'

'What's the problem, then? If she wants it, let him give it to her.'

'I know that, but–what is it–he's fifteen now, isn't he?'

Cynara realised soon enough that the boy referred to in their conversation was his son. She tried to remember a profile of him she'd read somewhere. She seemed to recall three children, but wasn't sure if all were by his wife or one by the voluptuous actress who was his concubine.

'Take him and get him chipped, yes, that's a good idea,' he was saying, 'and get her an abortion if she needs one. And tell him to keep his bloody head down. Only in our house, and only at festival time.'

He chatted compatibly into the device for a while. Cynara startled when he ended the call and looked at her, his expressive face earnest.

'It seems my endlessly randy son is at it again,' he said. 'We stopped him last time, because he'd only just turned thirteen, but he's fifteen now. I think he can handle it.'

Curiosity won out over good taste. 'But what about your law?'

'Some parents are stricter than others on the "sixteen rule"', he said, 'depending on the position their families and ancestors took on slavery. Many parents would give their son a slave woman to practise on. It stopped him pestering citizen women and made him a better lover when the time came to start courting.'

It was clear from his expression he liked this particular tradition.

'Goliath'–the lean one–was nimble at clambering around the inside of the cage, securing one of the wooden truncheons. He belted 'David' with it a couple of times, but the bigger man used his weight and height to step inside the smaller man and deflect him into the base of the metal bars. 'Goliath' sprang up immediately, his weapon still in hand. Fighters of all stripes stuck themselves full of drugs and were bloody hard to kill. The dosages were sold in metered phials, but there was nothing to stop enterprising individuals from buying at several apothecaries one after the other and self-medicating.

They also often came from among the poor, although there were certain better-off types who found the risk addictive and thrilling. She'd even known one of her fellow students–he'd failed his finals–go to a well-known *lanista* as a sort of protracted suicide note. She'd been appalled at the thought of seeing him die in the cage, but his erstwhile friends insisted on watching him whenever he was listed to fight. Leon told her he had dishonoured himself by failing his exams and then compounded the dishonour by going to the *lanista*. His death, however–if done properly–would reclaim that lost honour. She did not grasp this until the day she saw him die, exposing his neck to an opponent's pole-with-a-blade without flinching away. She saw her friends cheering the manner of his death, saw the crowd come to its feet in the smoke-filled pit on the Aventine as his body was borne away.

Evil is live backwards, she thought after that.

She noticed they made no attempt to grab each other: their oiled skin kept them upright, stopping the bout from turning into an ugly grapple on the floor. Goliath delivered a vicious low kick to David's thigh, holding the truncheon in front of his face, his chest rising and falling as he gasped for air. The kick seemed to galvanise the latter, and he made a despairing leap for the bladed pole, pulling it down from above into his hands and circling it around his head. The polished steel gleamed in the light. Now they both had weapons the fight was more even, and the bigger man used his reach to slash at Goliath, scoring his shoulders and back. In time they faced each other like two bleeding statues, their movements blurred and imprecise from fatigue. The fight must have been going for nearly half an hour by this point; both men had had chances to land a killing blow, but were too exhausted to strike with effect. Her head was ringing from the noise of the crowd. Lust mixed with disgust, and fascination mixed with fear. She looked at Agrippa, wanting him but also wanting to be ill. He was leaning back in his seat, munching contentedly. From time to time he leaned across and fed her something.

'Surely they'll stop it,' she said. 'They'll both collapse from loss of blood.'

'This is a rare treat in Jerusalem. The crowd will expect to deliver a verdict.'

David hacked with his blade at Goliath's ankles. Both of them slipped around in the blood pooled on the floor, and Cynara half stood as Goliath pitched forward. His Achilles tendon had been cut. David stood over him, dripping, turning his weapon in his hands so that the blade pointed downwards. He swept the crowd with his gaze; the cage slowly lifted and the silver-cloaked barker emerged from the gloom. He banged his staff three times again, standing just clear of a pool of blood.

'Is it time to die?' he bellowed, turning and turning.

To her very great relief, the crowd spared him. She watched, hollow eyed, as attendants hosed down the blood and carried both men away on stretchers. Agrippa touched the back of her neck again, and she felt her resistance yield.

LAST WORD

SOMETHING MORE

I LIKE TO THINK I AM DESCENDED FROM AN ABORIGINAL WOMAN WHO GRABBED AN OPPORTUNITY AND RAN WITH IT. THAT'S WHY I CELEBRATE AUSTRALIA DAY AS A DAY OF LIBERATION. BY KERRYN PHOLI

WE can project all sorts of fantasies onto our Aboriginal ancestors. There is scant record of their individual exploits or characters, and very few colonial Aboriginies left behind a documented account of their experiences. I could, therefore, decide that my foremothers were courageous warriors of the resistance, or mysterious keepers of ancient feminine wisdoms, or I could envision them as victims and martyrs, enduring the humiliations of colonisation with grace and dignity. These romantic fantasies would be accepted as fact, and my 'truth' would be applauded. My own (arguably more plausible) vision is that my Aboriginal foremothers had the good sense to form alliances with the settlers, and that they improved their own lives and their children's prospects as a result.

I don't begrudge any Aboriginal person a desire to fill in the blanks in their histories with romanticism, particularly given the rewards on offer. The story of white injustice and black tragedy has become the most acceptable Aboriginal tale to tell, and is now the only perspective on Aboriginal history – despite that dearth of documented accounts – that could possibly be accepted as authentic and true. To suggest that our story is not all about victimhood is bad enough; to suggest that modernity was in any way a blessing is double-plus ungood crimethink.

National angst over Aboriginal history peaks every summer, when we agonise over the meaning of Australia Day. There was no blood shed at Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788; no shots were fired or spears thrown, although plenty of both were to follow. It is understandable that some Aboriginal people regard the arrival of the First Fleet as an invasion, and object to the celebration of this event. If foreign tanks were to roll into your home town, heralding a new order that you did not anticipate or invite, 'invaded' is how you would probably feel. I am comfortable with calling it an invasion, and yet I don't regard that invasion as a calamity, because one man's 'invasion' is another man's – or in this case, woman's – liberation.

Those who mourn the demise of Aboriginal culture almost always regard things from the viewpoint of the men, who were indeed dispossessed of their land, and subsequently their traditions and status. Land wasn't the only item of property they lost, however. They also lost, traded or gave away their women to the settlers, and this absorption – along with frontier warfare and disease – rapidly eroded tribal structures and doomed Aboriginal traditions to obsolescence. The settlers arrived with a wealth of goods and a shortage of females, and they were generally less enthusiastic about beating women than was customary in Aboriginal culture. In contrast, the Aboriginal men held no wealth, treated their women appallingly, and there were few taboos to prevent women from straying – and so stray they did. The men lost a lot in the invasion, while the women had little to lose and plenty to gain. Modern-day Aboriginal women who mourn the loss of traditional culture have rocks in their heads. (Metaphorically, that is. Back then, it would have been literally.)

I DON'T BEGRUDGE ANY ABORIGINAL PERSON A DESIRE TO FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THEIR HISTORIES WITH ROMANTICISM, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE REWARDS ON OFFER.

Throughout human history, females have almost always been the ones to marry out, to be farmed out, or carried off by a rival tribe. We are instinctively inclined to be adaptable and opportunistic; tribal loyalties and maintenance of traditions are a lesser priority than security and material comfort for ourselves and our children. We will tend to prefer men who hold a winning hand over those who are losing – and we will inevitably be resented by the losers as fickle, greedy bitches for doing so. The orthodox perspective on colonial history portrays Aboriginal women as virtuous victims of mass rape by the white invaders, or as shamefully exploited concubines at best – anything but women acting on their natures and pursuing their own self-interest. The purveyors of the approved version of Aboriginal history try to simplify the narrative to 'white males oppressing black women', yet every adult knows that when it comes to sex and money, the power dynamic is more complex than the double helix of our DNA.

It's those opportunistic Aboriginal women to whom many of us owe our Aboriginal heritage, especially those of us who

THIS AUSTRALIA DAY, I CELEBRATED ALL THOSE FICKLE, GREEDY, OPPORTUNISTIC BITCHES WHO WALKED AWAY FROM THEIR CAMPS AND WENT AFTER SOMETHING MORE.

have benefitted from generations of integration. For insights into the fate of those women who didn't have a chance to jump ship, visit one of those remote communities that former Indigenous Affairs Minister Amanda Vanstone once so accurately described as 'cultural museums', and see the miserable time that the women have of it there. Generations of separatism has left these women more isolated and trapped than Aboriginal women were in 1788. Surely that's something for feminists to be angry about?

Social critic Camille Paglia once said that if the world were run by women, we would all still be living in grass huts. Perhaps – but only if we never saw anything else. If we were to see something better, a grass hut would no longer do. Our hunger for something more and better – more rights and more freedoms, better housing and quality of life – prods our menfolk to innovate and trade, and forces traditional cultures to either reform or die. On 26th January 1788, modernity hit Aboriginal Australia like a tsunami, and the women suddenly saw possibilities beyond a grass hut.

This Australia Day, I celebrated all those fickle, greedy, opportunistic bitches who walked away from their camps and went after something more. I'll celebrate that I live in a time and place where I don't have to make such a choice, where I don't have to put up with beatings, where I am not merely a thing to be traded and discarded, and where I have more freedom, security and material comfort than even the most ambitious of my Aboriginal foremothers could ever have imagined.

SUBSCRIBE TO PENTHOUSE.COM.AU

/PenthouseAU

@PenthouseAU

Penthouse_AU

PenthouseAustraliaNZ

Precious Pinot

"Growing Pinot is one of my greatest pleasures. Making quality Pinot is all about diversity of the fruit and winemaking styles, building complexity within the glass. Through our careful selection we produce over 20 different individual wines which come together for our Hill Top Pinot Noir."

- Randal Tomich

Hill Top Pinot Noir

94 Points

James Halliday

★★★★★ **5 Star Winery - James Halliday**

1403 Onkaparinga Valley Road, Woodside, South Australia

Cellar Door 87 King William Road, Unley, Adelaide **P** (08) 8299 7500 **W** tomichhill.com.au